35

BATMAN
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE BAT

PROPHET
LIEFELD & PLATT SPEAK OUT

CONAN
INSIDE THE BARBARIAN HERO

WIZARD®

JULY 1994
NUMBER 35
$3.95 U.S.A.
$5.35 CAN.

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THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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THAT STARTED
IT ALL...
RETURNS!
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Number 35
July 1994

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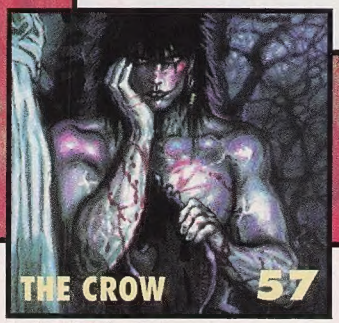

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THE CROW ™ & © J. O'BARR

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PROPHET ™ & © ROB LIEFELD, INC.

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WIZARD AND THE WIZARD LOGOTYPE ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF WIZARD PRESS

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Wolverine & Maestro ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group Inc

"So, do you want to come up to my castle and read the new Wizard? It's got a great interview with George Perez on page 82"

"That Wolverine guy thinks he's so freakin' tough! If he shows his face in Gotham I'll tan his hairy hide!" Maybe Azrael has gone too far; see what's in store for the Barworld on page 74.

Batman ™ & © DC Comics.

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

Gareb nails Chip & Dale for steroid use.

A LETTER FROM OUR PUBLISHER

Covered

To start things off, a special thanks to Stephen Platt and Bill Jemas—the VP of Entertainment Cards and Business Development at Fleer—for this issue's excellent covers. Steve really outdid himself on our direct market edition's Prophet piece (them's some big guns!), and Bill Jemas (with a special nod to Mark Johnson and Dale Robbins) provided us with a truly awe-inspiring Wolverine newsstand cover by Mark Texeira. You'll see this piece of art pop up again as a card in a new Marvel set from Fleer Flair. I couldn't think of two nicer covers to slap on this issue, which is the best, if not the goofiest, issue of *Wizard* we've ever produced. The slightly bent *Wizard* crew had a lot of fun putting this book together, and it shows. Hope you like it.

We've managed to cook up some really fantastic contests for this ish. We've got the Prophet contest, featuring great prizes like original Platt art, autographed issues, and all sorts of cool Extreme stuff. Then there's the Wolverine contest, through which you can win *Incredible Hulk* #180-#182; the Crow contest, with neat *Crow* movie and comic prizes; the Savage Dragon contest; the Shadowhawk contest... Heck, the list is endless. (Actually, that's all of 'em. Except for the regular contests like Drawing Board and Homemade Heroes, which're pretty neat too.)

If I'm not mistaken, that's the bottom of the page comin' up at me. Thanks for buying this issue, and until next month, take care.

Gareb S. Shamus

Big fat Irish guy in charge	Pat McCallum
Assistant Irish guy, not quite so fat	Brian Cunningham
Contributing editor constantly in motion	Marc Wilkofsky
Price guide editor we've never seen	Jon Warren
New guy who works on the price guide	David Prager
Unholy lord of the undead (also a price guide guy)	Bob Marshall
Guy who writes stuff, knows everybody, and is a plumber's worst nightmare	Rob Samsel
Copy editor who craves the taste of human flesh	Matthew E. Milliken
Research assistant who craves the taste of doughnut flesh	Dan Reilly
Goateed art director who wears a saggy diaper that leaks	Matt Tierney
Design assistant with a computer possessed by Satan	Arlene So
Ensure-guzzlin' memo-writin' fuzzy production manager	Doug Goldstein
15 writers and a dentist	Robert T. Bogley Henry T. Colonna III Dave Galvan Paul J. Grant Greg McElhatton Todd McFarlane Jim McLauchlin Patrick Daniel O'Neill Tom Palmer Jr. Jason R. Rich Bart Sears Stephen Shamus Craig Shutt Gary St. Lawrence Robert J. Sodaro ...and Ilan Shamus as himself
Special guest haircut	Steve Blackwell
In there like swimwear	William A. Christensen Mark Seifert
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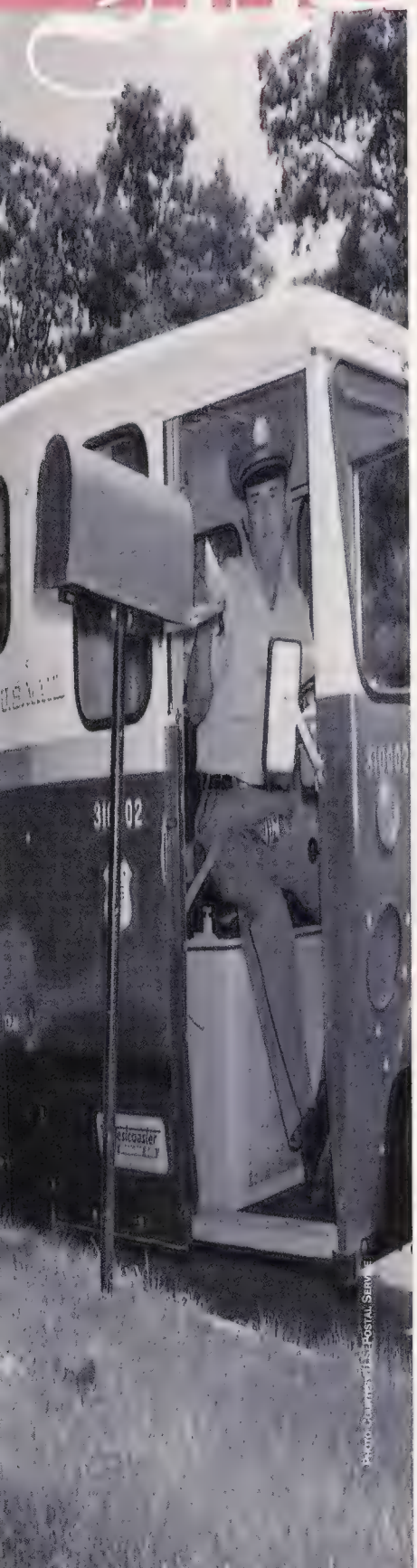
Production/General Info, and a heck of a nice gal	Karen Evora (NY)
Pretty picture on cover (direct market)	Stephen "Dude!" Platt
Pretty colors on cover (direct market)	Digital "We come through in a pinch" Chameleon
Pretty picture on cover (newsstand)	Mark "Call me...Tex" Texeira (and those Fleer Flair guys)
WhizBang, Secret Lettering Font	Those crazy guys at Valiant
Guy who signs the checks and walks around like he owns the place	Gareb S. Shamus
Knows what's going on and acts as Gareb's anchor to Earth	Martha Scheidegger
Administrative assistant who tells you where to go	Mercedes Cabo
Promotions manager/schmoozologist	Lori Hament
Marketing services manager who's still waiting for copy	Christine Cush
Office manager, and if you get in her way she'll kill you	Brenda Cook
Wizard/Progard Customer Service	(914) 268-3594

BPA International membership applied for November 1993

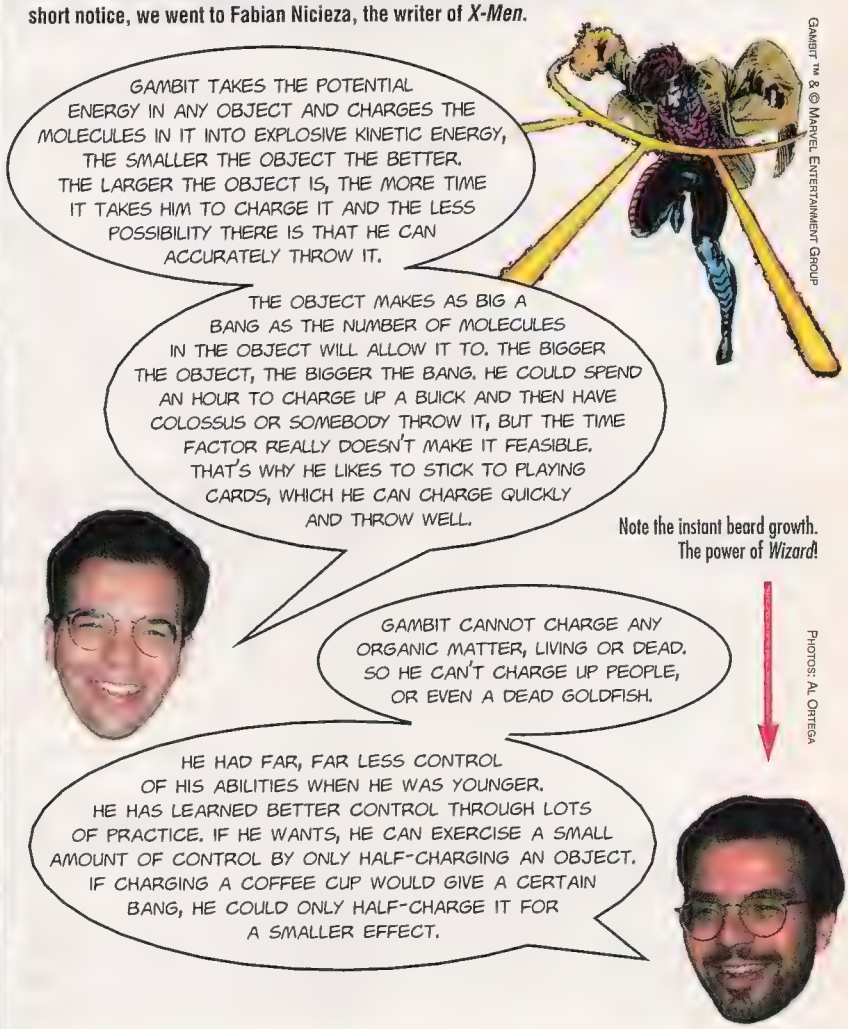
Magic Words



Boy, do we get lots of letters. I mean lots and lots and *lots* of letters. And as sick as this may sound, I really dig reading them all. Usually our esteemed leader, P. McCallum, reads 'em all first, then gives 'em to me in one big batch. I bring 'em home, sit down with a two-liter bottle of Mandarin Orange Slice and a couple of microwave burritos, put Fishbone's *The Reality of My Surroundings* on the disc player, and just go to town on them. It's fun to kind of have my finger on the pulse of collective comic geekdom (more on that later).

This month we had a few "themes" in the letters. Dozens of people wanted an explanation of Gambit's powers. Dozens of people responded to the E.G.O. column that runs every month in *Wizard*. And we've had about a billion and 53 cards, letters, and calls about the Scavenger Hunt that ran in *Wizard* #32. So we're giving you an explanation of what Gambit does, and running one letter each on E.G.O. and the Hunt that kind of sum up the general feeling. OK? Here we go...

We decided that the best way to figure out just what the heck Gambit does and how he does it would to be to go right to the horse's mouth. Since we couldn't locate Mr. Ed on such short notice, we went to Fabian Nicieza, the writer of *X-Men*.


GAMBIT TAKES THE POTENTIAL ENERGY IN ANY OBJECT AND CHARGES THE MOLECULES IN IT INTO EXPLOSIVE KINETIC ENERGY, THE SMALLER THE OBJECT THE BETTER. THE LARGER THE OBJECT IS, THE MORE TIME IT TAKES HIM TO CHARGE IT AND THE LESS POSSIBILITY THERE IS THAT HE CAN ACCURATELY THROW IT.
THE OBJECT MAKES AS BIG A BANG AS THE NUMBER OF MOLECULES IN THE OBJECT WILL ALLOW IT TO. THE BIGGER THE OBJECT, THE BIGGER THE BANG. HE COULD SPEND AN HOUR TO CHARGE UP A BUICK AND THEN HAVE COLOSSUS OR SOMEBODY THROW IT, BUT THE TIME FACTOR REALLY DOESN'T MAKE IT FEASIBLE. THAT'S WHY HE LIKES TO STICK TO PLAYING CARDS, WHICH HE CAN CHARGE QUICKLY AND THROW WELL.
GAMBIT CANNOT CHARGE ANY ORGANIC MATTER, LIVING OR DEAD. SO HE CAN'T CHARGE UP PEOPLE, OR EVEN A DEAD GOLDFISH.
HE HAD FAR, FAR LESS CONTROL OF HIS ABILITIES WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER. HE HAS LEARNED BETTER CONTROL THROUGH LOTS OF PRACTICE. IF HE WANTS, HE CAN EXERCISE A SMALL AMOUNT OF CONTROL BY ONLY HALF-CHARGING AN OBJECT. IF CHARGING A COFFEE CUP WOULD GIVE A CERTAIN BANG, HE COULD ONLY HALF-CHARGE IT FOR A SMALLER EFFECT.

GAMBIT ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Note the instant beard growth. The power of *Wizard*!

PHOTOS: AL ORTEGA

Since Gambit can't charge organic matter, one reader asked specifically if he could charge the Juggernaut's armor while Juggy was still in it and make him go boom. Says Nicieza, "It's feasible, but the amount of time it would take to charge would probably result in the Juggernaut turning Gambit to yogurt first."

As to Gambit's oh-so-stylish trench coat,

Nicieza says, "The trench coat comes from his being a thief. He can keep his tools there and stash stolen goods. It really has become something of a comic fashion trend. Now everybody's wearing one. But the minute Speedball gets a trench coat, it's over; that fashion is over and we'll all have to move on to something else."

Dear Wizard,

I do not work in the comic book industry, but I am in a profession that depends highly on marketing—music—and felt compelled to respond to Todd McFarlane's ignorant points about the subject (E.G.O., *Wizard* #31).

Though I've enjoyed Mr. McFarlane's artwork (let me stress: *artwork*!) since his early days at Marvel, and continue being a fan of *Spawn*, I have come to the realization that he is quickly becoming the Dan Quayle of Comicdom. He speaks entirely too much of things he knows nothing about, and is not articulate enough to convey what thoughts he does have.

Welcome to Marketing 101.

[McFarlane's] Spawn Hot Wheels cars are a great idea, but are more of a sales ploy than a marketing gimmick. People who enjoy the comic book will certainly [look] for the cars, but the same can't be said for the reverse, which is what marketing is all about. (By the by, his funny car may be the only one with a comic book theme, but it's hardly original. Corporate sponsorship has been around as long as cars have raced.)

He disagrees with Malibu's claim that they have the hottest comics. Having never seen Malibu's line, mainly because the shelves at the closest specialty shop are choked with worthless Image titles, I can only say that if that's what they believe, they've done nothing wrong. Marketing is the key to any business. The people at the top generally think they are putting out a top-of-the-line product. Marketing is about transferring *their* enthusiasm to retailers and the consumers. This being the case, no one is "cheating" anybody.

Comics, like music, are judged in terms of personal taste. Who is to say what's hot or otherwise? McFarlane would like to think he'd be on the top of anyone's list, but I don't think he'll ever be in the same league as John Byrne, Frank Miller, or, yes, Howard Chaykin. And there are those who would disagree with me. I'm sure he'd be one of the first. My point being, you can't regulate anything that deals with an individual's preference.

Marketing is not about protecting consumers but informing them. The company has a product they want to sell. That's where it ends for them. The retailers have the toughest job in trying to predict sales. I've been on both ends of that. You don't want to spend money or time promoting an obvious seller like the X-Men when you should be trying to sell something new. On the other end, it's easier to gamble on something new if you have some support from the suppliers. The problem in both ends of the comic industry today is that the collecting aspect has taken over the market. That adds to the retailer's already difficult task of predicting sales. This has as much to do with marketing as it does with the quality of a book: almost nothing.

In a perfect world, we could expect gospel truth in promotion, and [retailers would] be able to forecast item sales to the number. Of course, in a perfect world, *Power & Glory* would outsell *Spawn*.

Corey Peterson
Alexandria, VA

Dear Wizard Staff,

I have two questions concerning your latest contest, the Scavenger Hunt.

1) Why would you have everyone who enters your contest send you the articles on the checklist? Wouldn't it be easier to have them send you a clear photograph of themselves with all the articles surrounding them?

2) Just what do you plan on doing with all of the scavenger packages you receive after the contest is over?

Not all of your readers have the funds to be able to get all of the articles, let alone send them to you. Not to mention that your average 10-to-16-year-old doesn't have an "Elvis thing." I'm sure his or her parents do, though, and I'm sure they won't miss anything.

I think that this contest is a bit unfair, and I'm sure most of your readers will agree.

Thank you for your time...

A Real Cheese Head (Born and Raised in Wisconsin),

Sheldon Cherry
Roanoke, IN

I have two answers concerning the Scavenger Hunt.

1) The reason we had contestants send in all the goodies is because the proof of the pudding is in the tasting, baby. Nothing verifies like having the stuff in hand. The contest was made to reward those people who had the gumption to go and track down all these items, not whoever could share that green shoelace with three of their friends. Plus, there's a lot of items. You'd probably need to take several clear pictures.

2) Uh...we really don't know just yet what we're going to do with all this stuff that has come in. The unused Denny's napkins will probably go to the lunchroom and the Scrabble vowel titles we'll use to make swear words when we play. We may give away some of this stuff in bulk in a future contest.

A few more points. I really don't understand your concern over the funds needed to accumulate all these items. I would personally assess the total retail value of all Scavenger Hunt items combined at around $3.25 at the most. You can generally get things like paint stirrers and Burger King crowns for free. I checked the postage on the first scavenger package we received and it was $1.41. A completed scavenger hunt, signed, sealed and delivered, should run any contestant $5 or less.

Most people really dig the contest. We have heard some complaints from retailers who have called to complain about things like "all these kids coming in and looking at the comics and asking if we carry Pez dispensers." To which I say, "Well, it's good to hear that this contest may boost your traffic and sales, and maybe you should think about selling Pez."

Dear Jimbo,

How in blazes do you tell if a comic you have is first or a second (or thereafter) print? I got a few that showed up in a grab bag of assorted comics bought sight unseen and have no earthly idea if they're first printings and worth something.

Gail Shelton
Hillsboro, TX

Check that little fine print paragraph o' fun that's usually at the bottom of the first or second page of most comics. It's called the indicia. You know, where it says, "*Smash-Man* is published monthly by Smash-Face Comics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Petit Bourgeois Industries, blah, blah, blah." First, second, and subsequent printings will be listed there, usually on the absolute last line. If you see nothing, assume the book is a first printing.

Also check out the cover; several publishers—such as Marvel—change the cover's format on second printings, and others use numeric notations to mark additional printings. DC, for instance, prints roman numerals in the price boxes on the covers of second and subsequent printings.

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to "Pen Pals," c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words' address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Michael Oblizajek
Age: 19 Sex: Male
562 W. Vandenberg
Oakland University
Rochester, MI 48309-4401
Likes: *Fantastic Four*, Superman, *JB's Next Men*

Alison Mackey
Age: 13 Sex: Female
W220 N10520 Amy Belle Rd.
Colgate, WI 53017
Likes: All X-titles, all Image titles, *Ghost Rider*

Yaron Dahan
Age: 16 Sex: Male
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Long Beach, NY 11561
Likes: X-titles, *Spawn*, *Detective Comics*

Donnie Penn
Age: 20 Sex: Male
7212 Jacksonville Cut Off
Jacksonville, AR 72076
Likes: All Valiant titles, *Warriors of Plasm*, *Ren & Stimpy*

PITT™ & © DALE KEOWN

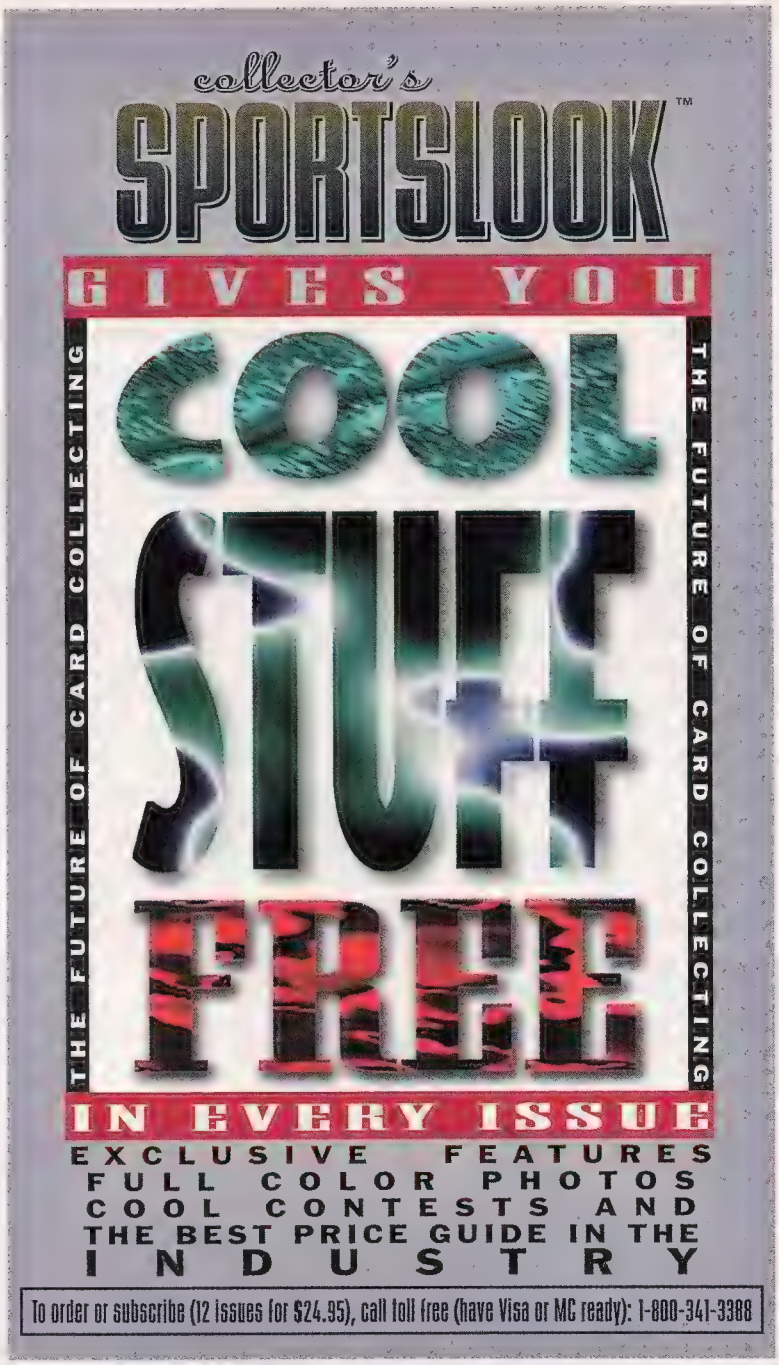
Most Esteemed Master of Sorcerers,

Why do y'all (the *Wizard* staff) give Superman such a hard time? So what if he's a boy scout on steroids? I bet he can kick Pitt's butt. Supes verifiably came back from death. (How many comic book characters have done that?) What do you think of a Superman vs. Pitt crossover?

Loyal Superfan,
Chance Watts
Fort Worth, TX

We think *Superman vs. Pitt* would be at least four months late in shipping.

And all comic characters come back from the dead. Baron Zemo is the undisputed master, having done it so many times that I've lost count. So has Dr. Doom, Supergirl, Captain America, Wonder Man, the Sub-Mariner, Phoenix/Marvel Girl/Jean Grey, Wonder Woman, Lobo, and Doomsday. Always remember Comic Axiom Number One: Only Bucky Stays Dead!



THE TWILIGHT ZONE™ & © CBS ENTERTAINMENT

Dear Wizard,

I have a three-company crossover story idea to share. It's called *The Image Wars*. The story starts with Thanos using the Infinity Gems to travel to the Image Universe, where he finds that every hero looks like Cable or Wolverine, all women have large breasts and impossibly tiny ankles, and most villains look like Stryfe.

Not liking what he sees, Thanos travels to the DC Universe and enlists the help of the Spectre. They both go back to the Image Universe so the Spectre can pass judgment on the Image creators. All the Image heroes and villains gather together to save their creators, and thousands of speculators (left from the Valiant Wars) join the Image army to save their collections.

As the Image army moves closer, Thanos brings forth Peter David to write every Image title. Faced with the horror of having to be in well-written stories and having to do more than pose for splash pages and fight, the Image army surrenders. Thanos then polybags the remaining speculators with a *WetWorks* foil trading card and puts them in an acid-free box until they're worth something.

The Spectre passes judgment on all the Image creators and tells them this: "You claim that you don't want to be Marvel, but you have become the best and worst of Marvel." He then forces them to take back every late book, including all 180,000 copies of *Deathmate Red*. They [are also forbidden from soliciting] any books that are not finished or that they probably didn't start, and finally, he places them in exile until they can find a copy of *WetWorks* #1.

John Steinke
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Wizard,

A couple of days ago I read a book called *Something Wicked This Way Comes* by Ray Bradbury, and the bad guy's name

in the book is Mr. Dark. He runs a circus sideshow where he has all these freaks. Bradbury has another book called *The Illustrated Man*, where a man is covered in tattoos that are constantly shifting.

There is a comic book villain named Master Darque in Valiant comics. He has lots of freakish guys with powers to do his bidding and he is covered with all these shifting tattoos. I think I know where this comic villain came from.

Jonathan Torres
Houston, TX

A big hand for Jonathan, please, as he provides the opportunity for (Ta-ta-ta-DA!): Jim's Artsy-Fartsy Literary Soapbox!

There's a whole honkin' literary world out there beyond comics. Those of you who are comic readers but read nothing else should try a novel once in a while. Many comic characters have their origins in other forms of literature, and many comic writers, being word guys themselves, draw their inspiration from outside sources. Reading the occasional novel can greatly increase your appreciation of comics, too, as many literary references you may be completely unaware of are being made right there under your nose. Think you can read a Howard Chaykin comic in a cultural vacuum? Think again.

In order to get prospective readers started, let me recommend a few titles, all of which I think are most groovy and all of which kind of have a comic-like fantasy or escapist feel to them. There's Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Pierre Boulle's *Planet of the Apes*, Michael Crichton's *Sphere*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Dear Wizard,

I was offended when, in issue #31's Magic Words, y'all at *Wizard* referred to us wonderful comic collectors as "geeky." All my life these damn stereotypes have been pissin' me off. Who's to say someone is "geeky"? Certainly not you, me, or anybody in the free world. That would be like me saying, "Man, those guys over at *Wizard* are sure weird—always blasting out polka music and talking Scandinavian while drinking liquid nitrogen." I can't say that. For all I know, you could be the type of people who read Shakespeare and listen to Verdi. The only people who call others "geeky" are moronic and insecure.

Matthew W. Love
Stockton, CA

I, James Joseph McLauchlin, am a comic geek. I say it loud and proud. I consider it no insult. As far as I'm concerned, this means nothing more than I am a comic reader. I dig 'em. I like 'em. I look forward to them coming out every week. I'm also a basketball geek, a single-malt Scotch geek, and a Sunday newspaper geek. No big deal.

You are right, however, in that blanket statements like this can often be wrong or sometimes hurtful. For instance, I couldn't polka to save my life. I can really cut a rug doing a waltz or a fox trot, though. And you ought to see me bunny hop!

But who's Verdi?

Dear Wizard,

What are Marvel and DC doing to themselves? A little more than a year ago, the death of Superman storyline sold big. Now we all knew that Supes had been around since 1938, and they wouldn't just kill him. Sure enough, they bring him back...

Now Marvel gets in the act and kills Dr. Doom and Mr. Fantastic, takes Wolverine's [adamantium] away, and forces Captain America to retire! And Daredevil and Batman get new costumes! (Only now, it's a different Batman!)

[My point is] that after 30 to 50 years of classic superheroes, why are they all being changed at once?

Ralph Suarez
Lake Grove, NY

Because it creates opportunities to do great stories. All the Superman titles have been outstanding since the whole Doomsday/Death thing. The Daredevil and Batman storylines were among the most popular of the year. And as for Doc Doom and Mr. F., you may want to read the next letter.

Dr. Doom ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Dear Wizard,

Did you know that Mr. Fantastic will be making a guest appearance in *Doom 2099* soon? It's true!!

'toons

The prizes we're giving away to the 'toons artist this month are a *Bone* trade paperback with an original Jeff Smith Bone sketch and signature inside and a *Sword of Azrael* trade paperback with an original Joe Quesada Azrael sketch and signature inside!

Kevin Fermoyle
Rochester, MI

X-Men ™ & © 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

Fans who wish to submit their own cartoons to *Wizard* for possible publication as a 'toon should mail their entries to 'toons, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. Submissions in pencil, neon inks, or metallic inks will not be accepted; submissions in any other medium—crayon, pen, marker, et cetera—are fine. Artwork must not be larger than eight by 11 and a quarter inches. Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork; mail flat to avoid damage. Illustrations may be single or multiple panels. All entries are nonreturnable.

Kevin Zuzolo
Age: 13 Sex: Male
526 New Hempstead Rd.
Spring Valley, NY 10977
Likes: *Morbius*, *Spawn*, *Bloodshot*

Arlo Clizer
Age: 15 Sex: Male
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Royal City, WA 99357
Likes: *Spawn*, *WildC.A.T.s*

Nichelle Tran
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Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548
Likes: *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*

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Age: 21 Sex: Male
926 Melbourne Ave.
N. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V7R 1N7
Likes: *Archer & Armstrong*, *Solar*, *Spawn*

Ask the WIZARD

Q: In Spanish, "pez" means fish. Is this a clue as to what's in Pez?

—J. Hierholzer, Floresville, TX

A: *We did a little checking, and as it turns out, Pez is 87 percent trout.*

Q: Why does everyone call Captain Marvel Shazam?

—C. Bates, Magnolia, MN

A: *Because Marvel Comics copyrighted the name Captain Marvel for a comic which featured various incarnations of its Captain Marvel character. This forced DC to use* Shazam *as the title for its Captain Marvel stories. (I always thought Shazam sounded cooler anyway.)*

Q: What comic book characters besides Mantra and the new Matter-Eater Lad have changed gender?

—J. Leatham, Chester, NY

A: *Actually, there's been a few: Captain America, Cloud, Him/Her, Lobo, the Martian Manhunter, Shwaughn Erin (the Legion supporting cast member), and Dr. Occult. (Mighty strange trend in comics, doncha think?)*

Q: Could Lobo have beaten Doomsday?

—J. DeWitt, Erie, PA

A: *As much as we are Main Man supporters, we'd have to say no. (It'd be a hell of a fight, though.)*

WIZARD wonders...

How do toilets work in Atlantis?

Ask the Pros

Hey Todd McFarlane...
"Are we ever going to see that Spawn/Spider-Man crossover?"

—T. Jarice, New City, NY

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064

Let me explain:

The year is 1993.

The place is Latveria.

The comic is *Fantastic Four* #381.

If you have a copy handy, flip to page 30. Here we see Dr. Doom and Mr. Fantastic disappearing in front of Dr. Doom's castle. Ooooh. Notice the flash of light and Dr. Doom's shredded costume.

Now let's travel...

The year is 2099.

The place is Latveria.

The comic is *Doom 2099* #1.

Flip to page 3. Here we see Dr. Doom appearing in a flash of light. He is in front of his castle and wearing his shredded green costume. Hmmm....

Gee, I wonder where Reed Richards is?

Mike Hanlon
Sheboygan, WI

Interesting theory. It sounds good. When pressed for an answer, Marvel publicity guy Gary Guzzo says only, "Hmmm. This guy is really thinking now, bub. I mean *really* thinking now."

Dear Wizard,

With all the criticism flying back and forth in your pages about the recent trend of comic book gimmicks vs. actual quality product, I just have to point out the content of the *Wizard* [promotional ad] for issue #32. "Nationwide Scavenger Hunt. Chromium WildC.A.T.s trading card. Die-cut Kid Death & Fluffy bookmark. Spawn/Batman jam cover." Hmmm...no mention whatsoever of upcoming articles. Gosh, could these be—gasp!—*gimmicks*?!

Wendy Hunter
Portland, OR

There's one major difference I see. You pay more for the "gimmick" comic. The cover price here stays the same every month. The mag is $3.95 each month, and everything else in the bag you essentially get for free.

Dear Wizard,

What determines how much a comic is going to cost? Some comics seem to cost more but have fewer pages than other comics that cost less. My older brother tells me that all comics used to cost the same. I can see these [older comics] on the racks at the comics store, and I wonder how the companies could stay in business selling comics for only 20 cents or a quarter each.

Govind Agarwal
Denver, CO

Basically, what determines the cost of a comic is the will of the publisher. Every company is different, and applies different standards to what cover prices it puts on its books. Most companies now sell their books on a variety of different levels at a variety of different prices. One thing remains constant, however—cover prices keep going up.

So what's up with that? Are we being wazooed by greedy publishers? Depends on your point of view. When I was growing up, comic books cost 25 cents. But baseball cards cost 15 cents a pack, movie tickets were two bucks, and a new Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme went for $4,000. Comic prices have increased, but not really to any extent that seems out of line with the general rate of inflation.

Dear Wizard,

I was looking through the price guide in *Wizard* #31 and saw a picture of a *Wolverine* #1 (mini-series). It had a diamond around the issue number and price, but mine doesn't; it has a square around the issue and price with the letters "CC" under the price. What gives?

Shane Jannings
Bourbon, MO

Same comic, different distribution. The "diamond cover" Marvels from this era were direct market copies, sold through comic shops. The "square box cover" Marvels were sold through newsstands and other general retailers. The "CC" on these copies stands for Curtis Circulation, a major magazine distributor. The reason for the difference is that comic shop retailers pay less for their comics but can't return unsold copies for a refund. The newsstand retailers pay more but get to return their unsold issues. Today, the "CC" notation keeps these comics straight for distributors when they sort through returns.

There was actually a short period of time when many collectors thought the "diamond" versions were worthless reprints. Not so. They're exactly the same, except for that little corner box.

Tootsie Roll ®

TOOTSIE ROLL INDUSTRIES INC.

Dear Wizard,

How many licks does it take to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop?

Michael Weir
Washingtonville, NY

Three.

Dear Magic Words,

I have two questions:

1) If I wear my underwear on the outside of my pants, do I become a superhero?

2) If I wear two fully inflated large balloons on my chest, do I become a female superhero?

Christopher Carnaval
Malverne, NY

1) No, but you would be qualified to get a job here. It worked for me.

2) No, but I can guarantee you $20 an hour dancing at the right bar.

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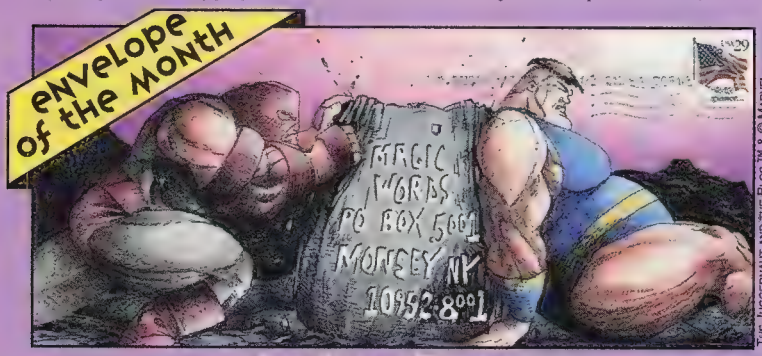
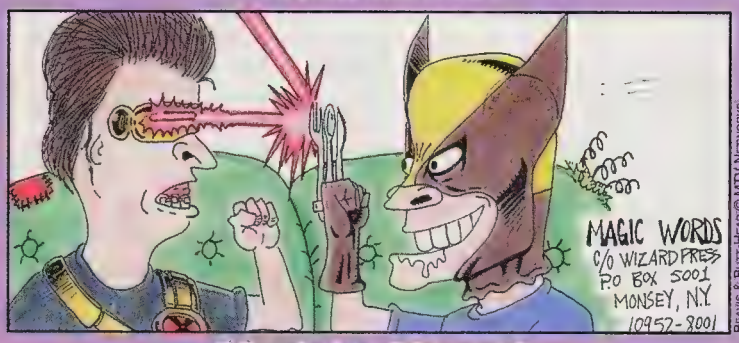


THE JUGGERNAUT AND THE BLOB ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Joshua Dowd
Greenville, NC



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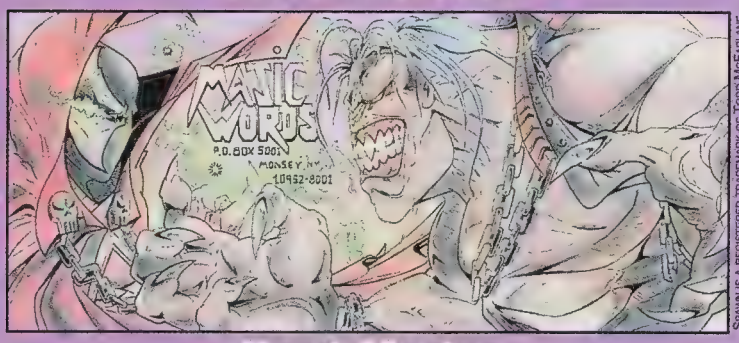
Madaly Ahmad
San Francisco, CA



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Pim
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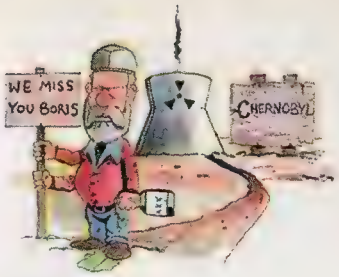

ART: DAVID PRAGER

Hello,

I, a year ago last, come to the U.S. from Soviet Union. I too discover comic books, *Wizard* also. Hope have I to be serious writer to books, so think I *Wizard* for to be best employment first. Write reviews to books, what I will. Also, I to give evaluation personal. Example this:

#75 Superman

Here big story end, the Superman, he kill Cossack Doomsday, also but kill by him too. Point of story, what? Many pages for artist to paint big fight. Conversation, there is little. But worry *not*! Superman, he to return soon! In multiple men, yes? Look not for the thinking deep, nor this book, but slugfest much! (Hey, Image book this?) Rate: B-

Yes, short the review, but expand I can. Need new writer, you do? Myself, much known in Soviet Union. Appeal I am to new Soviet readers, of books new to U.S. Also, I to use new "hip hop" language and readers young to relate good. If soon to employ me, *not* be unhappy you. You need résumé, yes? Sorry, not one I have. But not expensive to be paying wages to am I. Work I very hard for little money. I hope soon you reply.

Honestly,

Boris Mxyzptlkovsky
Pittsfield, MA

Really, folks. People send this stuff in.

Yo to My Homies at Wizard,

I gots a question for ya. If Colossus can, like, turn into metal, can he still do the armpit fart? Could you publish this in *Wizard* #34, if I'm not too late?

Erik Chapman
Paris, TX

Sorry, too late.

Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin is really only a comic geek in his spare time, as he is a full-time editor of* Wizard*'s companion publication,* Collector's Sportslook. *He recently finished 79th in an NCAA basketball tournament pool in which 86 people participated.

Send your letters to:
Magic Words
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Congers, NY 10920-2064

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Spider-Man 2099 #1 Starblast 1,2
Strangers 1,3,5-7 Superman 81
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X-Men Adventures 1-3,6, Vol II #1
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Archer & Armstrong 9-16,19
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Batman 441,442,445,500(Newsstand)
Blood Syndicate 1 Cain 1,2
Cadillacs & Dinosaurs 1 Deathblow 1
Darkhawk Annual 2 Darker Image 1
Deathmate Prologue #0
Dr. Mirage 1,2,4 Doom 2099 12,13
Dinosaurs For Hire 1-8 Ex-Mutants 1-7
Eternal Warrior 7,9-16 Ferret 1
Gravestone 1 Genesis Ashcan #1
Golden City 1-4 Hardware 1
Guardians Galaxy 42,44,46 Hero 2-4
Harbinger 16-25 Image Swimsuit 1
Hard Corps 2-9,11-18 Iron Man 290
Lobo Blazing Chain of Love 1
Magnus 21,22,24-33, vs. Predator 2
Mad Dog 1 Motormouth 1
Namor 37,39,45,46 1963 #1,2,5,6
New Warriors 43,45, Annual 3
Protectors 1,3-10,12,13,16
Punisher 75 Punisher 2099 #1,15
Punisher War Journal 50,61
Punisher War Zone 18,19,22-25
Rai 9-11,13,18 Ravage 2099 3,5
Ren & Stimpy 16 Resurrection 1,4
Robin II #1 Secret Defenders 1,2,14
Savage Dragon vs. Megaton Man 1
Secret Weapons 2-4,7-9
Shadowman 11-15,17-19
Silver Sable 1 Solar 19-22,25-27,30
Spirits of Vengeance 5,7,12,16
Static 1 (Bagged) Steel Harbor 1-4
Superman 82 (Newsstand Edition)
Superman Legacy, Superman: Newstime
Thor 460,468 Tribe 1 Turok 1,3,5
Vortex 1 Warlock & Infinity Watch 1,7
X-Factor 72,84,87, Annual 8
Youngblood: Strikefile 1

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Adv Superman 500,501,505(Collector) 502,507-510, Annual 5
Aliens: Colonial Marine 1,4 Rogue 2
Aliens vs. Predator II #2 (New!)
Art of Homage 1 (48 pages - Image)
Amazing Spider-Man 366,368,373, 374,376,378,382-388, Annual 27
Avengers 360 Avengers Strike File 1
Batman 493-499,501-503,505 500 (Collectors Edition)
Batman: Legends of Dark Knight 1-7 23-25,28,48,51-57,55,57
Bloodshot 2-5,8,10,13,16
Bloodstrike 1,3,6,7 Brigade II 1,4-7
Brigade 3,4(1st Series) Cyberforce II #1
Captain America 423-425, Annual 12
Codename: Strikefile 1 Death 3
Daredevil 324-327, Annual 9
Dark Horse Comics 7(Star Wars),16
Deep Space Nine 1,2 (Star Trek)
Detective 660,662,664,666-672
Dr. Strange 61 Exiles 1-4
Freex 1-5(Lim 2) Good Guys 2,4
Ghost Rider 18,20-24,28-35,37,40-48
Hulk 409,413,414
Images Shadowhawk 1-3 JLA 71(1st)
Infinity Crusade 1-6 JL Task Force 5
Lobo 1 Lobo: Infanticide 1,3
New Mutants 100 (3rd Print)
Omega Men 5 Q-Unit 1 (Limit 1)
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Robin 1 (Collectors) Savage Dragon #3
Savage Dragon II #2-6 (Regular Series)
Shadowhawk 3,4 Shadow of Bat 16-21
Shadowhawk II 1-3 Shadowhawk III 1
Spawn 8,9,11-13,15-18
Spect Spider-Man 201,202,204-210
Spider-Man 16,27,30,31,38-45
Spider-Man 2099 4,6,12,13,17,19
Spider-Man Mutant Agenda #0,1,2
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine 1,2
Stormwatch 1-7 Supreme 2-8,10
Superman 76,78-80,84-87, Annual 5
Superman Man of Steel 19,20,22,23,26,27,29,30, Ann 2
Steel 1 (New!) Super-Patriot 1-3
Team Youngblood 1-6
Uncanny X-Men Original 1 (1991)
Union 2,4 What If 48,58
Venom 2,4 Venom Enemy Within 2
Wild Star 1,2,4 Wizard 21,27
Web of Spiderman 90 (Gold cover) 100,101,105,107-110, Ann 9
X-Factor 90,91,95-97,99
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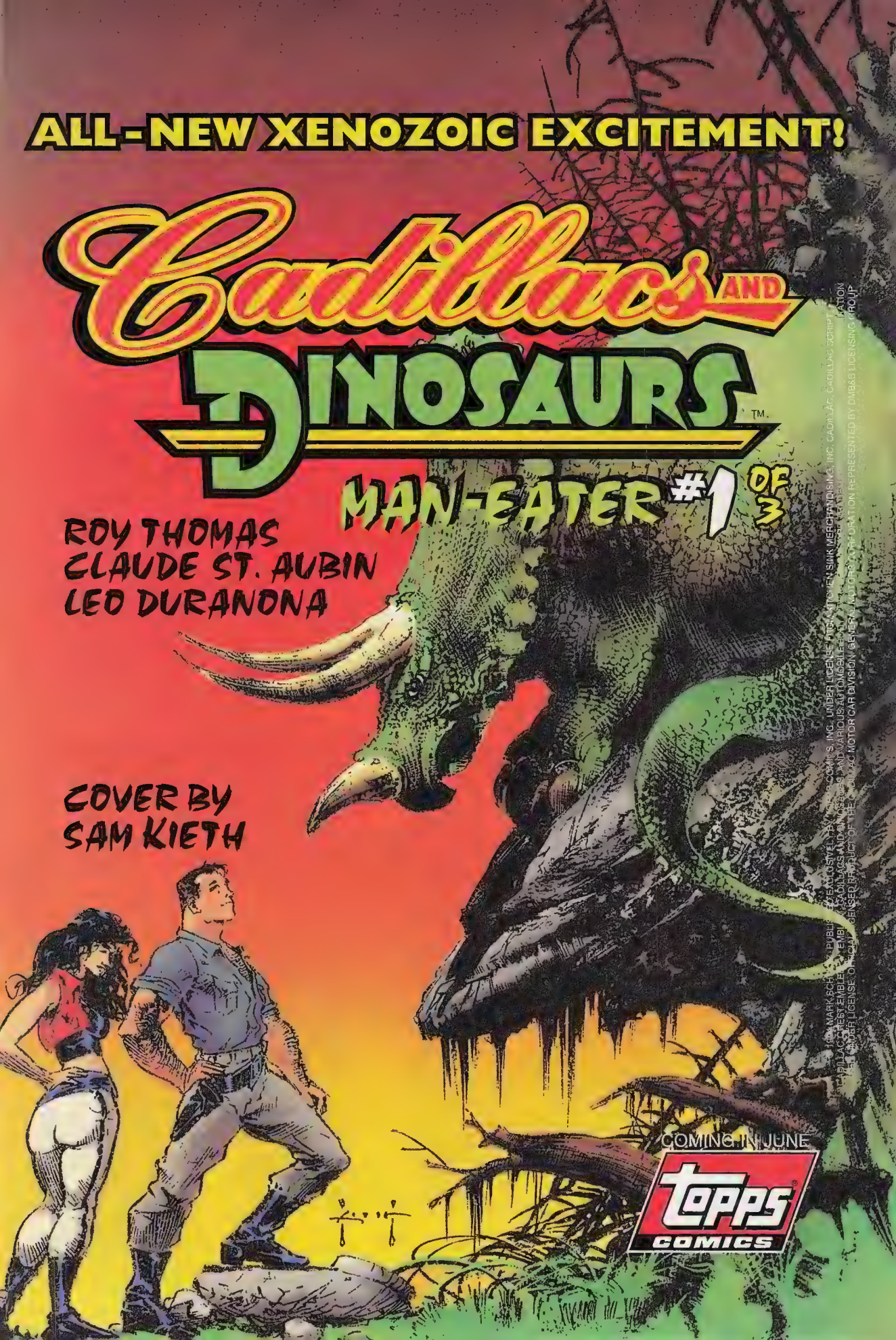
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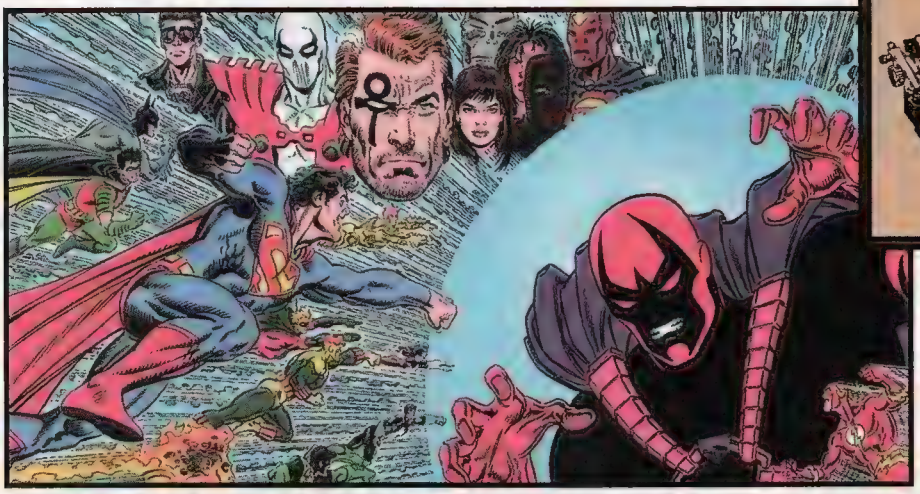

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ZERO HOUR Is Upon Us

Your favorite DC heroes go for a swim in the deep end of the time stream!

Major happenings are definitely in store for all DC Universe characters this July and August, when the five-issue ***Zero Hour: Crisis in Time*** will rock the publisher's superhero titles to their cores. Although DC is being vague about its plans, it calls this mini-series a "launching point for a stronger, cohesive, more accessible DC Universe where, like its heroes, readers can start anew."

The weekly mini-series, written and penciled by **Dan Jurgens** and inked by **Jerry Ordway**, begins with issue #4 (shipping July 12) and counts down to August 9's *Zero Hour* #0. Throughout the series, established characters and titles such as ***Green Lantern*** and ***Hawkman*** will dramatically change, although exactly how much remains a mystery. Jurgens plans to deal with the **Justice Society of America** with "some degree of finality," linking the characters to World War II, but refuses to specify their exact fate. The mini-series will also lay new groundwork for ***The Darkstars***, ***The New Titans***, ***Flash***, and ***Wonder Woman***. Meanwhile, other titles, such as ***Team Titans***, ***Valor***, ***Justice League International***, and ***L.E.G.I.O.N. '94***, will each undergo a different type of change: cancellation.

Zero Hour's premise is that the legendary Crisis on Infinite Earths (chronicled in 1985-86's 12-issue *Crisis on Infinite Earths* mini-series) never truly ended, and that the time continuum of the DC Universe continued to disintegrate. Now the universe's heroes must find a way to repair the damage before everything is destroyed.

In *Zero Hour* #4, readers witness the death of a future Flash, the appearance of a healthy Barbara Gordon (aka Batgirl), and multiple contradictory incarnations of Hawkman. In #3, the Justice Society responds to the death of the Flash by placing itself on the front line of the battle to restore time—although the JSA might change its minds when it learns the identity of the mysterious manipulator of the time stream. The issue also reveals secrets about Waverider and the Time Trapper and introduces the one "true" Hawkman.

In *Zero Hour* #2, a DC team becomes a pawn of the time manipulator, and Superman, Captain Atom, and Wonder Woman discover which one it is. In *Zero Hour* #1, the 30th century of the Legion of Super-Heroes is expunged as the heroes of the 20th century battle onward to save it. #1 also contains the birth of Power Girl's child and a major development for the Atom.

In *Zero Hour* #0, the DC Universe is obliterated. But from the darkness emerges an all-new universe—a new beginning, a fresh start. However, a battle must still be fought by the Spectre, and one final mission awaits Earth's heroes. All DC Universe titles shipping from August 16 and September 6 will be numbered with a zero so readers can enjoy the fresh start.

Photos: Al Ortega

Cyclops & Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel

Plans to relaunch Marvel Team-Up *go awry. "Hey, aren't you a clone?" "Hey, weren't you married to a clone?" Fists fly and DNA is spilled.*

"RED HOT POKERS! RED HOT POKERS!" Erik Larsen explains Image's drastic new plans to get their books on schedule.

Flaming Carrot ™ & © Bob Burden

"Whoo-ee!" exclaims unprepared comic fan. "Never use the public bathrooms at a comic con!"

JIM LEE Acquires WETWORKS

WetWorks, the most anxiously awaited **Image Comics** title, is slated to ship in July—but that's not the big news. The big news is that **Jim Lee** has bought the rights to the characters and the series from creator **Whilce Portacio**.

The three-issue mini-series, which was originally set to debut in 1992, will be plotted and penciled by Portacio, inked by **Scott Williams**, and scripted by **Brandon Choi**. Lee's acquisition of the series allows Portacio to concentrate on the artistic side of the mini-series rather than on the business end.

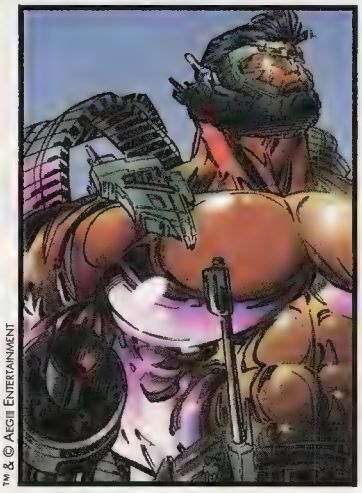
"I'm really pleased to have *WetWorks* become part of Wildstorm Productions," Lee says. "Early on, when we were forming Homage Studios together, Whilce and I used to talk about our plans and dreams for the future. We felt then that there was a link between his team and mine, and with this merger, that link becomes real."

WetWorks will be an integral part of Wildstorm Productions, Lee's corner of the Image Universe. For example, one member of WetWorks, Dane, was also a member of Team 7, a government-sponsored superteam of the '60s and '70s that will star in its own Wildstorm book debuting later this year. Lee maintains that Portacio will have control over his corner of the Wildstorm "universe."

A high-level Image source says that Lee gave Portacio "the deal of the century." Portacio will become a creative director for Wildstorm, working with new talent and developing new characters to be published by Image, including characters of his own.

"Jim and I have been friends for so long, I wouldn't even have considered doing this with anyone else," Portacio says. "I'm totally confident in the ability of Jim and Wildstorm to publish and promote *WetWorks* as well as I would."

WetWorks hits the shelves as a Jim Lee book? Sort of. It will be a Wildstorm production.



™ & © Aegis Entertainment

ACCLAIM to Buy VALIANT

Acclaim Entertainment Inc., best known for its video games, announced on April 7 that it had entered into an agreement in principle to acquire Voyager Communications Inc., publisher of **Valiant** comics, for $65 million in cash and/or common stock.

"Since its inception, Acclaim planned to diversify within the entertainment arena," says Robert Holmes, president of Acclaim. "Valiant is an exciting acquisition, not only as a profitable standalone business, but also because the potential synergies that exist between the comic book publishing and interactive entertainment industries are vast."

Acclaim says it intends to sign Valiant's current management to long-term employment agreements. Valiant's senior management includes Publisher and CEO Steven J. Massarsky, Senior Vice President and Editor-in-Chief Bob Layton, Senior VP Jon Hartz, VP of Operations Fred Pierce, VP of Finance Ed Dupre, VP and Executive Editor Tony Bedard, VP of Special Projects and Creative Director Don Perlin, and VP of Marketing Marty Stever.

(Bedard replaced former VP and Executive Editor Kevin VanHook in April. VanHook left his post to pursue a screenwriting career in Hollywood, but will continue to write Valiant's *Solar, Man of the Atom*; *Bloodshot*; and the upcoming *Visitor*.)

Many expect that Acclaim will produce video games based on Valiant characters. Valiant's Stever declines to comment on that subject pending the acquisition, but says, "We'll have all the power of Acclaim's marketing. As you know, they spend a lot of dough promoting its games. When they [acquire Valiant], expect the same kind of marketing push, and that push should benefit everyone in the direct market."

BYRNE Axes DANGER UNLIMITED

In a surprise move, **Legend** writer/artist **John Byrne** has canceled plans to continue his critically acclaimed ***Danger Unlimited*** title past the first four-issue mini-series, which was published by **Dark Horse Comics**.

Byrne cites low sales as one reason for the cancellation. "The orders for the third issue were actually lower than that of *Next Men*," he says. But he admits, "When I was working on it, there was a lack of enthusiasm in myself. It was an experiment. But if orders for the fourth increased, I suppose I could save it.

"I'm replacing it with a book called ***Babe***. It's going to be light-hearted and four issues. It's going to have a picture of a naked lady on the cover [of the first issue]; if that doesn't sell, nothing will," he laughs. *Babe*, set in the modern-day *Danger Unlimited* universe, chronicles the adventures of a female superhero, although Byrne insists "it's not *She-Hulk*."

Byrne has even more plans for the future. "**Mike Mignola** has persuaded me to do a sequel to *2112*, which will be a regular series in late '95 or early '96, coming out as a companion book to *Next Men*," he says.

Speaking of Mignola, ***Hellboy: Seed of Destruction*** #4 will be Byrne's final issue as scripter. Byrne felt by the writing of that book that he was doing nothing more than transcribing Mignola's suggestions. Mignola, creator and artist of *Hellboy*, will handle the scripting himself from now on.

™ & © John Byrne

Don't tell your mom, but Danger Unlimited *is being replaced by a book about a naked chick!*

™ & © Voyager

Do these guys shop at the same stores as H.A.R.D. Corps?

STARWATCHERS a No-Go

High expectations were placed on **Valiant's all-Valiant Vision *Starwatchers***. No one suspected, however, that someone else already had a Starwatcher.

According to Marty Stever, Valiant's vice president of marketing, Starwatcher is a character created by the famous French artist **Moebius**. Although Moebius never claimed ownership of the name, Valiant decided out of respect for the creator to change the title of *Starwatchers* to ***Psi-Lords: Reign of the Starwatchers***. The first issue of the series was solicited with the former title but shipped in April with the new moniker. The title will become simply *Psi-Lords* with the third issue.

Valiant has even gone so far as to alter its continuity: the name of the group known as the Starwatchers, who have made several appearances under that name, has been changed retroactively to the Psi-Lords. Stever says that the change of name will not alter any of the characters' previous history or future storylines planned for the series.

What's Up WITH... *Operation: Urban Storm?*

Operation: Urban Storm, a collaboration by the founders of Image Comics, was intended to benefit victims of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Because it took 15 months to receive all the artwork, the book was effectively canceled. All of the founders involved have agreed to release their respective parts of *Urban Storm* in other books.

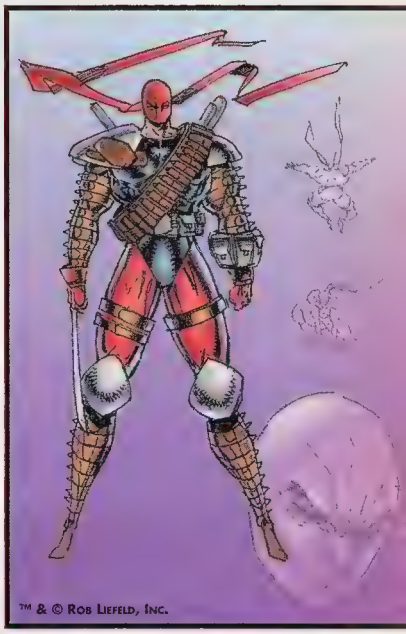
—William A. Christensen and Mark Seifert

BLOODSTRIKE Goes Solo

Image Comics's ***Bloodstrike*** team book will undergo radical changes this summer. The team will slowly unravel to make way for a solo character called Bloodstrike, who will become the sole star of the title.

This new direction was set by *Bloodstrike*'s new writing team, **Karl Altstaetter** and **Robert Napton**. One of Bloodstrike's first missions will be to capture the renegade **Prophet** for the U.S. government in a story that will cross over with *Prophet*.

"Now that Image Comics has more teams than the NFL, the NBA, and the NHL combined, we decided it was time *Bloodstrike* went solo," says Extreme Studios editor Eric Stephenson. The new Bloodstrike, designed by artist **Rob Liefeld**, makes his debut this month in *Bloodstrike #25*.



™ & © Rob Liefeld, Inc.

Bloodstrike is now a one-man operation.

COMPANY UPDATES

ANTARCTIC PRESS
P. Skylar Owen's *Knightmare* begins in July. It tells the tale of an elder hero passing the mantle to a newer, younger hero for the '90s. The series is expected to run at least six issues.

ARCHIE COMICS
August's *Archie's Super Teens #1* stars the Archie characters as superheroes. See Archie Andrews become Pureheart the Powerful, Betty become Superteen, and Jughead Captain Hero and watch their battles with Reggie (aka Evilheart) and other villains. By Elliot S! Maggin, Joe Staton, and Mike Esposito.

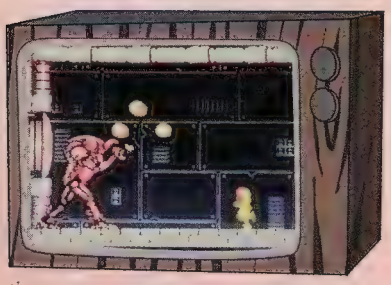
CALIBER PRESS
In July, look for the collected edition of the five-issue *Sinergy* mini-series, a modern retelling of Dante's *Inferno*. This 192-page book retails for $14.95.

CARTOON BOOKS
The Complete Bone Adventures Vol. Two, shipping in July, reprints *Bone #7-#12* by Jeff Smith. It contains a foreword by Neil Gaiman.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Dark Horse plans to collect writer/artist John Byrne's *Aliens: Earth Angel* story, which was serialized in Diamond Comic Distributors Inc.'s *Previews* catalog. A format for the collection has yet to be determined...Mike Mignola will let fellow Legend creator Art Adams have his way with Hellboy. Adams will write a one-shot special edition with "lots of monsters in it," according to Mignola. No date has been set for this project...Speaking of Legend, the four-issue *Concrete: Killer Smile* by Legend writer/artist Paul Chadwick begins its run in July. Concrete will try to save his best friend Larry when he's abducted by pyromaniacs who embark on an L.A. crime spree.

DC COMICS
After the "Judgment Day" story wraps up in *Justice League International #66*, major changes will occur in the Justice League titles. *Justice League America* will become a more traditional and straightforward book guest starring some of DC's "big guns," like Wonder Woman and Flash. *Justice League Task Force*'s new writer, Mark Waid, will make the book more of a lighthearted "heroes in training" book, along the lines of *The New Teen Titans*, *New Warriors*, and *Gen13*. *JLI* will be canceled; its team will be forced to consolidate with the JLA. DC isn't saying why, who stays, or who

Super Metroid
Nintendo of America Inc.
Super NES/1 Player
Available: Now



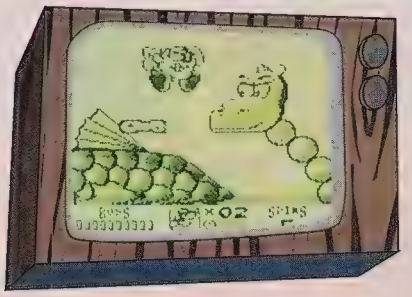
™ & © Nintendo of America Inc.

She's back! Nintendo fans know Samus Aran from the popular *Metroid* game series on the NES (released in 1987) and Game Boy (1992). For Nintendo's 16-bit system, *Super Metroid* offers an all-new, futuristic adventure featuring a tough female bounty hunter who carries an arsenal of deadly weapons. It features excellent character control along with superior graphics and sound effects that really set the mood for this exciting sci-fi adventure. The battery backup feature allows gamers to save their progress.

Super Street Fighter II Turbo
Capcom USA
Super NES/Genesis/Arcade/1 or 2 Players
Available: Summer '94

Many of your favorite warriors are back in this latest entry in the megapopular *Street Fighter II* game series. However, new characters (including an ultimate boss), backgrounds, and special fighting moves have been added. You'll also discover that the game's speed has been improved, making *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* a pretty faithful adaptation of the coin-op game. This cartridge will certainly rival *Mortal Kombat II* as the most popular fighting game released in '94.

Taz-Mania
Sunsoft
Nintendo Game Boy/1 Player
Available: May '94



Taz-Mania characters and all related indicia ™ Warner Bros.

After spinning his way into popularity on the Super NES and Genesis, Taz is making his debut on the Game Boy in this new adventure. Since his escape form the ACME Zoo, the zoo keepers and a big game hunter have been chasing Taz everywhere. Gamers must help Taz keep one step ahead of his captors and find a new home for himself as he runs, jumps, and spins across the five levels of the game. Using his Tornado Spin, Taz should be able to safely cross lakes and collapsing bridges and avoid the traps that have been set for him. For a Game Boy title, the graphics and game speed are impressive.

Coming Soon...

Malibu Comics's interactive division plans to release video games for both Sega Genesis and SNES. *Prime* debuts in the fall, while *Firearm* and *The Strangers* will have a 1995 release...Bart Simpson will soon be back in a new game called *The Simpsons: Virtual Bart* for the Nintendo and Sega. When Bart enters a virtual reality world, gamers must help him battle bullies...One of the first animated laser disc arcade hits, *Space Ace* (featuring animated graphics by Don Bluth), will be released for Sega CD and Super NES...The Atari Jaguar version of *Alien vs. Predator* should provide gamers with a good reason to check out this new 64-bit gaming system.

—Jason R. Rich

FULL MOON
To Publish Comics

Full Moon Entertainment, an independent company that produces and distributes direct-to-video films, announced at WonderCon in April that it has formed a new comic book division called **Full Moon Comics**. Full Moon Comics, scheduled to begin operating in spring 1995, will publish three science fiction, fantasy, and horror series, two of them ongoing and one a mini-series. The concepts will be developed by Full Moon Chief Executive Officer Charles Band.

"As the only comic book company that is fully financed as part of a film studio, Full Moon will bridge the gap between comics and entertainment," Band says. "Full Moon Comics is not merely a licensing or promotional tool of the film company but a standalone entity that will create new characters and titles that will be the property of Full Moon Comics."

Acting as publisher is Deni Loubert, a veteran publisher who co-founded Aardvark-Vanaheim (with Dave Sim) and Renegade Press.

goes at the moment, but it has announced a Justice League spin-off: *Extreme Justice*, a team book with a darker tone, will debut in late '94. While the JLA will try to prevent injustice, Extreme Justice will seek to avenge it.

DEFIANT
Defiant is changing the Canadian cover price for its 32-page books to $3.50; its 48-page books will bear a $4.50 Canadian price.

IMAGE COMICS
Spawn finally meets up with Supreme in *Supreme* #15, shipping in July, which is part of the monstrous "Supreme Madness" storyline. But will they be friends or enemies?

LIGHTNING COMICS
DreadWolf, who first appeared in *Bloodfire* #3, will star in his own monthly book starting in August. #1's cover is by Samuel Clarke Hawbaker.

FREEX Changes Direction

Malibu has announced that its **Ultraverse** title *Freex* will head in a totally new direction beginning with July's 40-page ***Giant-Size Freex* #1** and continuing in August's *Freex* #12. The publisher promises a new storyline, a faster pace, and a new look courtesy of **Scott Kolins**.

The storyline will introduce "The Old Man," a mysterious wanderer who is obsessed with training outcast Ultras to fight Rex Mundi. Contrary, a member of UltraForce, will be featured prominently; she too trains Ultras, but wants them to take over the Earth as leaders and protectors of humanity. Boom Boy will leave the existing Freex team and be replaced by Cayman, a reptilian monster with a surprising human identity. This storyline also ties into ***UltraForce***, which will debut in August.

"*Freex* will have more exciting locales and bizarre opponents, which means higher stakes and a much quicker pace," says Gerard Jones, the book's writer. "Look for more connections to the rest of the Ultraverse, too." Among those "connections": **Prime** will consider joining the Freex.

™ & © Malibu Entertainment

Sale at SOTHEBY'S

Photo © Sotheby's. Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

Papa John Romita shows off his recreated Amazing Spider-Man #50 cover.

On June 7 and 8, Sotheby's Los Angeles branch will display the 22 covers of classic **Silver Age Marvel** comics that the international London-based auction house recommissioned. The redone covers will then be displayed at Sotheby's New York location from June 11-17 before being auctioned on June 18.

Dick Ayers, **John Romita Sr.**, and the late **Jack Kirby** penciled and/or inked the covers, versions of ones they originally drew that have long been considered lost. The new versions were done at larger-than-normal size and feature the title logos, cover copy, Marvel logo, and Comics Code Authority logo. Each piece is expected to sell for $2,000 to $7,000. Each artist will retain the proceeds of the sale of his artwork.

According to Marvel, permission was granted to the artists as a show of appreciation for their contributions not only to Marvel but to the comics medium. "We were delighted when Sotheby's approached us many months ago with the idea of recreating landmark Marvel covers," says Marvel President Terry Stewart.

"Sotheby's first conceived of the project as a way to offer the artists a chance to reinvent these treasured covers," says Jerry Weist, Sotheby's comic book consultant, "and to provide collectors with the most sought-after Marvel covers."

Sotheby's Los Angeles office is located at 308 N. Rodeo Dr. Its New York City office is located at 1334 York Ave. For more information, contact Sotheby's at (212) 606-7424.

—Robert J. Sodaro

MALIBU COMICS
July's *Giant-Size Mantra* #1 will contain the debut of *UltraForce*'s Topaz, a "high-tech warrior woman." The two heroines combat the evil Boneyard...Malibu has declared July Martial Arts Month to promote the launch of its six-issue *Bruce Lee* miniseries and the ongoing *Mortal Kombat* series. *Bruce Lee* is by Mike Baron, Val Mayerick, and James Sherman. The storyline has Lee establishing himself as a martial artist in L.A. despite several challenges. Of course, there's plenty of action intertwined...

MARVEL COMICS
Marvel has announced plans to launch a *Hulk 2099* ongoing series sometime in the future. No more information is available.

MIRAGE STUDIOS
Writer/artist Peter Laird's *Stupid Heroes* #1 ships in August, guaranteeing fun for all...*Bioneers* #1, by A.C. Farley, also debuts in August. See firsthand what happens when human and animal tissue undergo genetic recombination experiments... *Xenotech* #1, written and penciled by Michael Dooney and inked by Robert Jones, ships in August. Xenotech is Earth's first line of defense against interdimensional invaders.

NOW COMICS
The double-sized *Ralph Snart Adventures Summer Special* #1 ships in July. It sports a computer-generated cover by writer/artist Marc Hansen depicting everyone's favorite drunken buffoon. Ralph will get his own ongoing series this fall.

ONE SHOT PRESS
Due out this summer is *The Best of One Shot Press*, a 56-page special containing both reprints of the best stories the publisher has ever released as well as all-new material. The book is due out this summer, but no price has been set.

TOPPS COMICS
Bill the Galactic Hero, Topps's first prestige-format book, begins in July. This rip-roarin' tale of an unlikely space hero is by Bill creator Harry Harrison, scripter Howard Zimmerman, and artist Mike Gustovich...Also due in July: *Jurassic Park: Raptors Hijack*, continuing a blockbuster tale of dinosaurs running amok.

VALIANT
Writer John Ostrander begins his run on *Eternal Warrior* with #27, shipping in July. This issue is a follow-up story to "The Chaos Effect" crossover.

WARP GRAPHICS
Terry Collins has signed on as regular writer of *Elfquest: Blood of Ten Chiefs* as of issue #8, scheduled to ship in July.

NIGHTMARE Contest WINNER

Andrew P. Savastino of Kansas City, Mo., is the grand prize winner of *Wizard* #28's Nightmare contest, held in conjunction with Roadshow Video Publishing. Contestants were to draw or write about their worst nightmare. Here's Andrew's:

The Christmas Eve Nightmare

After placing two chocolate chip cookies on a plate, I filled a glass with milk and set it next to the plate. With visions of St. Nick nibbling on a cookie by the Christmas tree, I was hustled upstairs to my bedroom.

The bedroom was dimly lit by the light of a single electric candle placed in the window. All was quiet in the room. I lay staring at the ceiling in the hopes that I might hear the steps of Santa Claus and his 12 reindeer. And then I heard something.

At first I thought that Santa Claus was on the roof. But then I heard the sound again, and it wasn't coming from the ceiling but from the window. Looking towards the window, I saw a single hand. It hovered outside the window and tapped at the glass with its fingernails. Slowly it scraped and beckoned as I turned my head away in disbelief. In the moment that it took me to look, the hand had appeared in my room and was perched with its stump of a wrist upon the window sill. Each finger was fanned in an arc. The light from the candle filtered through the outstretched hand and illuminated the room in the eerie red glow of its blood.

The figure on the sill began to speak. Although it had no mouth, the hand's voice was deep, dark, and commanding. "There is no Christmas," the figure began. "Christmas is for fools and those weak of heart. Santa Claus is a joke, and those who believe in him are pathetic."

I screamed at the hand, trying to prove to this dark being that Santa Claus did exist. Leaping from the bed, I darted for the door and descended the stairs to the kitchen. What I saw upon the plate brought tears to my eyes: two untouched chocolate chip cookies. The glass of milk still sat where I had left it.

From the adjoining room, a deep bellowing laughter began to emanate. Slowly, I walked towards the source of the laughter. A Christmas tree in the corner of the room twinkled its bright white lights. Sprinkled randomly across its surface were ornaments and tinsel. The star that once topped our Christmas tree was now replaced by the accursed hand. As the hand's laughter grew and filled the room, flames broke out on the tree, illuminating the room in its fiery glow. My hopes and dreams of Christmas drained from my body and were replaced with doubts and fears of a future full of lies.

With tears in my eyes, I ran from the room in an attempt to escape the hideous laughter. From the family room through the dining area and to the front door I raced, all the while hearing the sinister chuckles ringing in my ears. Bursting through the door, I headed for the car parked out front in the driveway. If I hid in the back seat of the car, maybe the hand wouldn't find me and continue its torture. In a panic, I struggled with the door handle until I realized something was seriously wrong. I look down. My hand was gone.

I looked to the bedroom window. Each finger of the hand closed around the electric candle. In a quick tightening of muscles, the bulb shattered. The light went out.

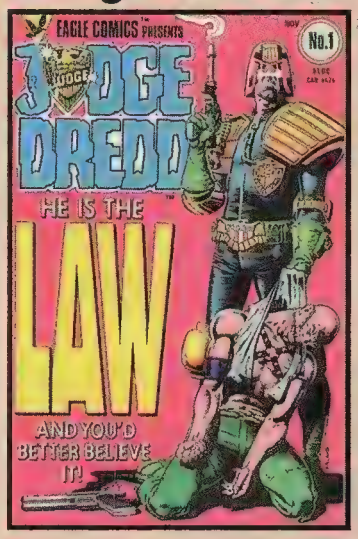
Andrew wins a Hitachi giant projection TV and VCR for his efforts. Congratulations!

DIANA SCHUTZ Named Editor-in-Chief

Dark Horse Comics has named Diana Schutz its first editor-in-chief. Schutz, best known as the editor for all of Matt Wagner's various **Grendel** series, joined Dark Horse in 1990. She will oversee all of the comics published by Dark Horse and will remain directly involved with *Grendel Tales* and other Wagner projects.

WIZARD looks back...

Judge Dredd



JUDGE DREDD ™ FLEETWAY EDITIONS LTD. JUDGE DREDD #1 ™ IPC MAGAZINES LTD.

He doesn't enforce the law—he *is* the law. Comics's original badass-with-a-badge, Judge Dredd, has influenced futuristic lawmen from Lobo to RoboCop since his 1977 debut in Great Britain's weekly *2000 A.D.* #2. The creation of writers Pat Mills and John Wagner and artist Carlos Ezquerra, Judge Dredd dispenses his unique brand of justice in a postapocalyptic future.

Mega-City One is one of three huge cities in the United States that were formed after a nuclear war devastated most of the planet. The cities are surrounded by a radioactive wasteland called "the Cursed Earth," which is inhabited by mutants. To prevent a complete breakdown of civilization, a sort of martial law was declared: around the year 2070, the Declaration of Judgement gave judges the authority to hunt and punish criminals as they see fit.

Potential judges are drafted at age 5 into the Academy of Law, where they receive 15 years of training. Successful Academy graduates become cadet judges and are tested further by patrolling the city under the supervision of a full judge. A cadet may become a full judge only with the approval of his supervisor.

After graduating from the Academy in 2086 and passing his "combat training," Joe Dredd became a full judge. He now fights crime on the multilevel streets of Mega-City One with the aid of his flying motorcycle, the Lawmaster, and his gun, the Lawgiver.

With stories penciled by popular artists such as Brian Bolland, Simon Bisley, and a host of others, Judge Dredd quickly became one of the most popular strips in Britain. In 1982, Dredd conquered the rest of Europe through appearances in France's influential *Métal Hurlant* magazine (from which the American *Heavy Metal* sprung) and many other venues. The Judge was packaged specifically for American distribution for the first time in November 1983 with the publication of Eagle Comics's *Judge Dredd* #1, which featured reprints of *2000 A.D.* stories.

In 1991, Fleetway (which publishes Dredd material in Britain) and DC Comics published *Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment on Gotham*, which brought the Dredd mythos—including his frequent supporting character, Psi-Judge Anderson, and his greatest enemy, Judge Death—to its widest American audience yet. Judge Anderson is a member of the Judges' Psi-Division, a group of specially trained psychic judges. Judge Death is a judge from another world where, since all crimes are committed by the living, life itself had been outlawed! Judge Death was slain with the rest of his world, but his undead form has come to judge ours. Fleetway and DC followed up the successful crossover two years later with *Batman/Judge Dredd: Vendetta in Gotham.*

This year, DC will publish the first all-new Judge Dredd material produced specifically for the U.S. market. Dredd begins his U.S. invasion with a series entitled *Judge Dredd*, set to be released June 14, and will follow up with *Judge Dredd: Legends of the Law* in October. DC will alter Judge Dredd's continuity somewhat—for example, his DC storyline will begin in the year 2045—but Dredd himself will be the same hard-boiled lawman who's been a favorite in Britain for the past 17 years.

—W.A.C. & M.S.

INTRODUCING FLAIR PRINTS OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE

MARVEL COMICS™

'94 FLAIR™

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CATWOMAN Changes...

As of August's #0 issue of ***Catwoman,*** **Jo Duffy** will no longer be writing the book.

Duffy wrote *Catwoman* since its first issue debuted last spring. She says that she didn't want to step down, describing the character of Catwoman as "terrific." She stresses that her departure "does not constitute any kind of breach between DC and myself," and she looks forward to continuing her association with the publisher.

Catwoman editor Dennis O'Neil would not comment on the matter but issued a statement through DC that read, in its entirety: "I admire greatly Jo's commitment to her self-published work and appreciate the time she took from it to establish a solid foundation for *Catwoman.* We wish her nothing but the best for the future." Duffy self-publishes the ongoing ***Nestrobber*** series.

Fans of Duffy can check out her work in *Nestrobber,* drawn by Maya Sakamoto; Milestone Media's *Technique* mini-series, due out this fall, which will be drawn by Colleen Doran; and Doran's self-published *A Distant Soil,* in which Duffy's stories can sometimes be found.

No new writer has been announced for *Catwoman.* Artist **Jim Balent** is expected to remain with the title.

This Month in History

Historic comic book events that took place in the month of JULY.

1934 *Famous Funnies* #1: The first monthly newsstand comic book is published by the Eastern Color Printing Co. The series featured reprints of popular newspaper comic strips.

1940 *All-American* #16: The Golden Age Green Lantern, created by artist Martin Nodell and writer Bill Finger in collaboration with DC editor Sheldon Mayer, makes his first appearance.

1951 *The Adventures of Superman* TV Show: The show that will play a critical role in ushering in the Silver Age of Comics begins production. This series chronicled Superman's TV exploits for 104 episodes.

1962 *Fantastic Four* #5: Dr. Doom, the prototypical Marvel supervillain of the Silver Age, debuts. Doom made more appearances in the Silver Age than any other villain, beating out such notables as Magneto and the Green Goblin.

1977 *World of Krypton* #1: DC introduces a new format for comic storytelling, the mini-series, with the publication of *World of Krypton.*

1982 *Love and Rockets* #1: Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez's ongoing chronicle of the lives of an eclectic group of characters premieres from Fantagraphics. *Love and Rockets* went on to become one of comics's longest-lived and most acclaimed independent series.

1991 *Superman: The Man of Steel* #1: Superman becomes the second character (after Spider-Man) in comics history to star in four regular monthly titles with this series's debut.

—W.A.C. & M.S.

Justice League America had already been crushed. Superman and Maxima lay unconscious among the ruins of a devastated town. Could no one stop Doomsday, the living engine of destruction? Leaving behind a trail of broken heroes, the monster moved ever onward, without mercy or remorse.

Suddenly, a new group of heroes arrived on the scene, daring to challenge the rampaging Doomsday! They were young and untried, but prepared to give their all in an effort to stop this creature. Could they possibly succeed, or at least slow the monster down long enough for Superman to join the battle once more? Doomsday roared, and rushed to meet his adversaries!

Sound like fun? With the DC Heroes Role Playing Game, you can join in the action of the oldest comic book universe in history, adding your adventures to those actually recorded by DC Comics.

GAMER'S GUIDE

BY ROBERT T. BOGLEY

Produced by Mayfair Games Inc., the DC Heroes Role Playing Game is really a good one. The system is not difficult to learn or play, requiring the mastery of only a few basic concepts. Actions are resolved by rolling the dice once and checking only two or three tables.

PHOTO © MAYFAIR GAMES. DC HEROES ™ & © DC COMICS.

Players can portray an established DC hero or make up their own with a character design system in which Hero Points are used to purchase attributes, skills, powers, and advantages. Assigning drawbacks to a character gives you more points to spend (and, of course, a more interesting character). A gamemaster can limit the power of the characters in his game by restricting the number of Hero Points that can be spent in designing them.

While this is a good game, it's not quite perfect. For example, the rules allow Batman to do as much damage with his fist as he can with a machine gun. Furthermore, a normal unarmed human could beat Superman into unconsciousness (although it would take some very lucky dice rolls). Various game mechanics have been put in place to minimize such results, but my search for a flawless system continues.

Among the best features of the rule book are a history of the DC Universe, notes on many places of interest, and short essays on various DC-oriented topics by industry professionals such as Roy Thomas, Robert Kanigher, Mike Gold, Roger Stern, Neil Gaiman, Dan Jurgens, and Paul Kupperberg.

This game is very nicely supported. Sourcebooks provide excellent detailed information on Superman, Batman, the Watchmen, the Legion of Super-Heroes, and others. Even non-gaming fans will find much of interest in these books, such as the Titans chronology offered in *The New Titans Sourcebook.* The *Who's Who in the DC Universe Supplements* provide copious information on scores of characters.

The various adventure modules available include two relatively unusual types: "Solitaire" materials, designed for use by a single player, and "Match-Play" materials, designed for two people. In Match-Play games, gamers alternate roles as player and game master.

Regrettably, Mayfair recently chose not to renew its license with DC and will not be producing any new material for this game. (Contrary to what was reported elsewhere, Mayfair has not discontinued its entire role-playing line; it still produces *Chill* and *Underground,* but has dropped *Role Aids* as part of a settlement with TSR.) The good news is that Mayfair is holding an "End of the Line" sale, marking down all of its DC Heroes stock every month until August. This is a great chance to pick up some cool stuff, including the original cover art from many of their DC products. For more information, write Mayfair at 5641 W. Howard St., IL 60714, or call (800) 432-4376.

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Gunloc gets pummeled by multiple hits of Biff Slamkovich's deadly sonic fist.

King Rasta puts the pin on Alexander "The Grater" with a super suplex.

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SPLAT

Prophet Margin

BUDDA BUDDA

Prophet's Rob Liefeld and Stephen Platt tell all about their upcoming plans for Extreme Studios's superstar supersoldier.

By Greg McElhatton

If you've been hearing people in comic book stores talking about Prophets lately, it could be that they've found religion—or one of the hottest books from Image Comics. Jonathan Taylor Prophet, the star of *Prophet*, was introduced in 1992 in the pages of Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* #2. Now Liefeld is making the character the centerpiece of an epic saga with the help of new co-plotter and artist Stephen Platt, beginning with Prophet's fifth issue.

Platt, a Toronto, Ontario, native, is a relative newcomer to the comics industry. He debuted in fall 1993 in Galaxinovels's *Agent Three-Zero* #1 but acquired widespread fame for his work on Marvel's *Moon Knight* #55-#57 and #60 (and the covers to #58 and #59), which are now red hot among current back issues.

"I first got into comics around the age of 12," Platt says. "I was a really big fan of *The New Teen Titans* and *Uncanny X-Men*. I thought what [artists] George Pérez and Paul Smith were doing on the books was incredible. I also read some issues of *Heavy Metal*, which probably explains a lot about how I turned out.

"By the time Paul Smith left the X-Men, I had gone to high school and gotten interested in the fine arts, art history, and stuff like that. The thing is, I was still always drawing Wolverine and Batman; I just wasn't reading their books anymore. I'd look at the occasional issue just for the art, but I wouldn't read it.

"Then, while I was in my third year of college, I finally decided to try to break into comics," says Platt, who attended the Ontario College of Art. "I still wasn't really reading them, but I was interested in the medium again. I had been working on a design career, working on storyboarding, advertising, and graphic

PROPHET AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS ™ & © ROB LIEFELD INC.

design. Every time a friend saw my art, they'd say, 'Wow, you should draw comic books!' I finally decided to give it a shot—if nothing else, it would shut them all up.

"I took a trip down to New York City and went around looking for appointments at major companies to show my work. I couldn't see anyone there, so I had to leave photocopies with receptionists. I was on my last day in New York and Rob Liefeld was going to be doing a signing at Jim Hanley's Universe [a popular chain of comic book stores] at 2 o'clock."

He had time to kill before going to the signing, so Platt went to cash his traveler's checks. At the bank, which was near Marvel's offices, he saw a man wearing a Marvel Comics jacket. "I figured it had to be someone who worked there, so I walked over and was very polite and found out that he worked at Marvel. He looked at my art and he said he was really impressed. So he took me over to Marvel and introduced me to all of the various editors.

"A week later, [editor] Terry Kavanagh was on the phone asking me if I'd draw a story for *Marvel Comics Presents*." The story, starring Moon Knight, went unfinished due to Platt's overwhelming academic load at college.

Ironically, Marvel editor Sarra Mossoff saw Platt's unfinished *MCP* story and asked Platt to take over the monthly *Moon Knight* title. When the school year ended, Platt jumped at the chance to draw his first full-length comic, and he quickly became comicdom's newest rising star.

Platt laughs. "The funny thing was, I never met Rob! I looked at my watch at one point and it was already 3 o'clock, and I said, 'Oh no! I have to go meet Rob Liefeld!' Everyone there was like, 'Nooooo, you don't need to see him.' As it turns out, Rob's said since then that if I had made it there and shown him my stuff, he would have hired me on the spot.

"I ended up working on the last half-dozen issues of *Moon Knight* and was then slated to work on *Cable*. Then I got the job offer from Rob to work on *Prophet*," Platt says. "After contemplating it, I called up [editor] Bob Harras and told him that I wasn't going to work on *Cable* after all. It was a really hard decision to make: I've always wanted to do a mutant book with Marvel, and here I was declining it! I'm not anti-Marvel or anything; I just had to decide which I thought would be the better career choice for me, and *Prophet* appeared to be the obvious choice."

How does Platt feel about going from being a big gun at Marvel to one of many big guns at Image? "I chose to go to Image because it is a creator-oriented publisher," he says. "As a creator, it is much more beneficial for me to be there; I own everything I create. At Marvel, I would not. I don't believe I've made a mistake. I consider it somewhat of an honor to be working at Image."

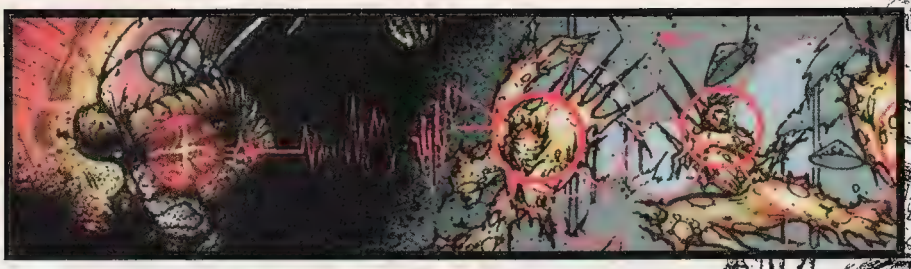
The cover of *Prophet* #5, Platt's first full issue.

Like Platt, Prophet was originally slated for a Marvel book. "Prophet was going to be a character in *X-Force* who was sent from the future to kill Cable," reveals Liefeld, the character's creator. "He was going to show up around #6 or #7 in my original plans, and the cover for *Youngblood* #2 originally had X-Force members looking on instead of Youngblood members. I soon decided that I was going to work on stuff that was creator-owned, so I pulled the character of Prophet and saved him for later."

Does Liefeld regret having left Marvel to co-found Image? "I'll admit that at times I think to myself that I really miss working on the character of Cable or the things I was going to do with him. But it's just like having an old girlfriend go and get married to someone else; there's nothing you can do about it. I just find myself working on *Prophet* instead. My original plans for *Cable* had an epic-like quality to them, and that's what I've got on *Prophet*—an epic. It's very different and very refreshing to work on just one character after so many team books."

It turns out that Prophet's origin is linked to two pop culture visionaries. "This is going to sound strange, but Prophet was inspired by Gene Roddenberry and Steven Spielberg," Liefeld says of the creators of *Star Trek* and *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, respectively. "When I was a kid, I always wished for a [*Star Trek*] phaser or teleporter—I still do. I look at everything that Roddenberry and Spielberg have done and it fascinates me to no end.

"One day I thought to myself, 'What if these guys were from the future?' They came to the past to show us everything that we will have in the future, sort of like blueprints. What better way is there to show people stuff than through the most powerful tool out there: the media? Then they take their money that they've



Above: Prophet's destructive train of thought.
Below: Platt's initial redesign sketches.

earned and bring it back to the future to fund whatever they need there.

"That's how I got the idea for Prophet: a scientist named Horatio Wells comes back in time from the future into the World War II era." Wells transformed the theretofore-ordinary Jonathan Prophet into a supersoldier by means of novel DNA-enhancing procedures. "Prophet is both a weapon and a time capsule that was going to be placed into stasis for many years. When the time was right, he would re-emerge in the future and do his duty by helping Wells's people in fighting the evil Disciples.

"The problem was that Hitler and his Third Reich heard about Prophet, who is basically the *Übermensch*. They tracked Wells and Prophet down, and the two of them just [vanished]. I don't want to say what happened to Wells, but Prophet was secured away from Hitler [by Wells]. When Prophet is found in *Youngblood* #2, he's freed from stasis." Unfortunately, the U.S. research expedition that rescued Prophet did so about 50 years too early for him to fight the Disciples.

How exactly did Prophet get his powers? "The idea is that there's a 'perfect DNA' out there," Platt explains. "Somehow, Wells was able to alter Prophet insofar as his DNA became 'perfect.' The process didn't work on other people—only him. His body's been incredibly enhanced—the man's seven-and-a-half-feet tall! He can understand and communicate in all languages—not only human languages, but with creatures that have their own language, like whales, or with computers.

"At the same time, he's very childlike, having been in stasis," the artist continues. "He doesn't know the social workings of the world that most of us take for granted: he can't hail a cab, and he eats ice cream too fast and gets a headache. By showing things like this, you present the character's humanity and make the character approachable. Readers can get attached to Prophet through things like this. It's sort of like Wolverine; people started to really appreciate him [as a character] after he almost got married and had his heart broken, or started thinking of the X-Men as his family. That's how the readers can empathize with him."

As demonstrated by the name of Prophet's partner, Jackson Kirby, Liefeld has a great affinity for the late comic book creator Jack Kirby. Readers might also note that Prophet's intelligent orbiting satellite, D.O.C.C. (which stands for Direct Orbital Command Center), which apparently restores Prophet's powers and acts as his counselor, is much like Jack Kirby's Brother Eye satellite from his *OMAC* series. Liefeld acknowledges the similarities but says that they're unintentional.

"The only link is that there's a satellite that talks to Prophet. I don't want to give much away...but the reader will find out that D.O.C.C. has nothing to do with Prophet's powers. We'll see that when D.O.C.C. is

destroyed, Prophet will not be affected. Y'know, honestly, I see more of a resemblance of Prophet to Captain America." That Marvel character also underwent experimentation and is also considered a supersoldier.

"By now, readers should be discovering that not everything that we've said about Prophet in the monthly book is true," Liefeld laughs. "In the first four issues of *Prophet*, we told the readers everything that John Prophet knows about his own origin. Then, starting in #5, we've started to show that Prophet himself doesn't know his own past. Both he and the readers have always assumed that Prophet was in stasis ever since World War II, but that's not true. The readers have now seen him being used as a mindless weapon of war in Vietnam, and the question is now how often has Prophet been used to do various dirty deeds—and how bad were they?

"The fact that Prophet was used in Vietnam [against the Viet Cong] says that he might have—and probably was—used elsewhere," Platt says. "He was basically a weapon that was rented out to whomever would pay enough money. Need a one-man army? Pay up and you get Prophet."

But not permanently. "Whenever a government rented or acquired Prophet, the neuromanipulative implants that the government implanted into [his brain] wouldn't last forever, as we showed in the Vietnam issue. Sooner or later, his neural network is going to override the commands that he's being given, so you have to send him in and out fast and go for quick, brutal missions..."

"Basically," Liefeld concludes, "Prophet's much more of a scary guy now—not because of things that he's done consciously, but things that he's done subconsciously. It really serves to add to his character; there are a lot of levels in *Prophet*."

Platt is also taken by the character's complexity. "Prophet's going to feel responsible for the things that people forced him to do, even though he can't remember them. He's always thought of himself as a good person, and now he's discovering that the things he did were hideous by all standards of human decency. He's going to have to take a spiritual journey to discover who he really is. Journeys that take place entirely inside your head are the best kind to write about.

"Prophet's got a long way to go for him to sort himself out—and this is a great way to start it all up."

Of course, every epic needs a villain, which Prophet got in issue #4. "The principal villain in *Prophet* is a man named Omen—he's a diabolical genius. Pretty original, huh?" Platt jokes.

"I don't want to soapbox with *Prophet*, but I was [talking] with a friend about Robert Oppenheimer's experiments and wondering if it was a good thing or not," Platt says. "He knew his work on splitting the atom was going to be used for malicious means before benefiting society. The very first thing they developed with these breakthroughs was the atom bomb, of course. I think Einstein knew just as well what he was getting into. They knew what they were participating in, but they stuck with it.

"Nothing places the human race in more peril than an irresponsible genius," Platt asserts. "A genius has the power to open doors for both the good and bad of mankind. Omen is an evil person, a narcissist, and he's insane. But he's a genius—you can't doubt his intelligence. He's extremely formidable and extremely intelligent; this is what happens when a monolithic intellect is matched with a monstrous person.

"We like to think that scientists are naturally altruistic people...but they're just people," the artist says. "They'll work for the best offer they can find, and if it's making biological weapons for the CIA, then that's what they'll take."

Platt, it turns out, enjoys tackling controversies. "I like to attack gray areas and make people discuss [them].... I like to have people present their arguments. The arguments may become heated and they may become extremely ardent in their views. In a book from Extreme Studios, that's all right!" he laughs.

"I like the idea of writing a good story that's entertaining, with an acceptable storyline and acceptable art. We often doubt the ability of kids to understand a complicated story, or to even consider it. We don't give them enough credit. If we can present it in some form that is entertaining, then an involved idea can appeal to them. Turn around, and you've just made an educational comic book."

Prophet might also be considered educational because it frequently employs biblical passages. "My father and my grandfather were both traditional Southern Baptist ministers," Liefeld reveals. "I suppose people could call me a born-again Christian if they really wanted to. I personally had never read about a hero that had strong Christian beliefs that were coupled by using passages from the Bible. It's almost a reaction to Bloodstrike," Liefeld's team of reanimated soldiers, "which is about as gruesome as you can possibly get.

"I grew up with my parents' beliefs until several years ago. It's part of the break that you make with your parents: you get your own apartment, establish your own traditions, and decide on what you believe," Liefeld says. "My beliefs were very intelligently challenged, and I found that I had to question them. It's very easy to believe whatever your parents believe. As a child, my absolute favorite heroes were Samson, Joshua, Gideon, and David. I'd stay up every Easter and watch [the film] *The Ten Commandments* and stay up much later than I would normally be allowed. I'd just watch the screen and say, 'Wow! That's Moses!' Samson killing Philistines with a jawbone, with his hair flying around all in the name of God, the Red Sea waters crashing in on the Egyptians: I thought that was all incredibly cool."

Prophet's father, like Liefeld's, was a minister. The character's life will parallel his creator's in other ways as well. "He's going to have to struggle to decide what he believes. There were several points in my life when I thought I was going to lose my father [due to illness], and I felt very alone then. My Christian beliefs kept me moving, and they're what I had to cling to; Prophet is going to have to go through some similar experiences."

Liefeld laughs. "Well, that's the intellectual reason, anyway. There's also the fanboy geek inside of me that thought the Bible had the first heroes that ever existed. I get a lot of excitement depicting these things. I've always

The book that made Platt a star: Marvel's *Moon Knight*.

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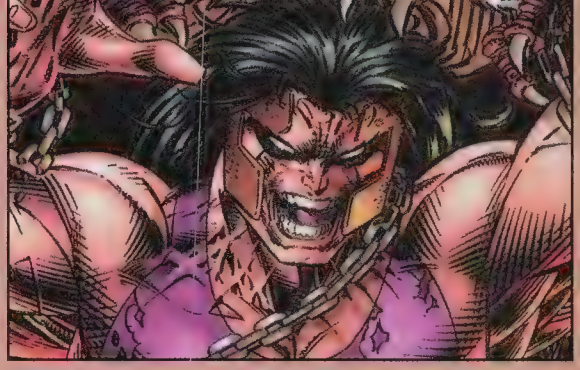
Panosian Unleashed

Ever since Stephen Platt became the new artist on *Prophet*, fans have been wondering about the fate of Dan Panosian, the artist of *Prophet* #1-#4.

"Let's kill all of the 'Dan Panosian got fired!' rumors right now," *Prophet* creator Rob Liefeld laughs. "Dan was never going to work on anything past #4; he had always intended to just work on the first story arc and then *Prophet* #0.

"While he was working on *Prophet* #0, Dan got an idea for a story that we're calling *Prophet Unleashed*," Liefeld says. The project, originally entitled *Prophet 3000*, is a four- to six-issue series due out in late '94. "[Dan] was thinking about how Horatio Wells created Prophet, and then read in an issue of *Supreme* how Wells was responsible for him as well. Dan called me up and asked if Wells had created any more heroes out there and I said yeah, he had. Dan smiled and said, 'Good, because I've come up with one.'



"This new character—whose name I can't say—has a totally different agenda than Prophet, and isn't dedicated to Wells's dream. Prophet's intelligent satellite, D.O.C.C., gets assaulted by this new character in *Prophet* #0, and [in *Prophet Unleashed* #1] they all get thrown into another dimension when this new character programs D.O.C.C. to open a gateway. Prophet, in a knee-jerk reaction, follows him through the gateway and the story takes on a Tolkienish, sword-and-sorcery fantasy kind of quality. This guy is easily going to be the greatest threat that Prophet's ever gone up against at this point."

"*Prophet* #0 is like a prelude to *Unleashed*, but it's not entirely necessary to read for someone to understand the story," Panosian says. "This weird dimension the characters fall into is not only Tolkienish, it's supposed to be a Conan-type realm with science fantasy, like power rifles and high-tech machinery. It'll have a little bit of everything."

"The work that Dan Panosian's doing on this series is incredible," Liefeld says. "It looks like some old Barry Windsor-Smith art, with lots of detail and stuff. If you liked his art on the first four issues of *Prophet*, just wait until you see what he's got in store for *Prophet Unleashed*. It's definitely something that any fan of *Prophet* will have to pick up!"

—Greg McElhatton

Dan Panosian will continue his prophetic efforts in a *Prophet* mini-series and #0 issue.

named characters after people in the Bible, [such as] Gideon, Saul, and Absalom [in *X-Force*]. The planned *Cable* mini-series would have started off with Cable killing the soldiers that stuck the spear in Christ's side. *Prophet* is where all of my obvious references are, but they're in other books as well. When you're a kid, it doesn't get any better than David and Goliath or Samson and Delilah."

Platt feels much the same way. "The Ark of the Covenant is one of the most documented objects of worship in the Bible. Legend speculates that if one peers inside of it, you get massive burns, your pupils dilate, and your hair falls out: in other words, the same symptoms as radiation burns... Hence one of the many historical theories is that the Ark contained a highly radioactive meteorite. It was put in a case, and if anyone opened it they would receive massive burns. It makes for a really wonderful mythical edge because it's all conjecture. You could say that the meteor might have been sent by someone or something, and that maybe it still exists.

"I love the idea of blending technology and cyberpunk flavor into mysticism: voodoo computers, cybershamans, cybermystics, wizards using technology—there are so many different possibilities," Platt enthuses.

"Stephen's got a lot of ideas... Some of them are great. Not all of them fit really well into the Image Universe, though," Liefeld comments. "We might do them in a possible upcoming book called *Imagine This*, which would basically be 'Image Comics Does Elseworlds.' Everyone loves alternate universes and ideas, like that episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* where the alternate *Enterprise* with Tasha Yar appears. Something like this would be a great place for these stories."

Despite being in the same universe as other Image characters, Prophet won't be crossing over with very many of them. "Right now I like him being by himself, letting the reader have a chance to get to know the character," says Platt. "Having guest stars may dilute the character and his potency. Maybe once we're more comfortable with the changed version of Prophet, we can have him interact more often. I like the idea of him interacting with other characters, but just not yet. It's Rob's decision ultimately."

At the moment, Liefeld wants to limit Prophet's interaction with the rest of the Image Universe. "We do have one thing planned that occurs as a result of *Prophet* #5-#8. Basically, Prophet becomes a fugitive and commits some heinous acts. He's very relentless and very unstoppable. Up until now, Prophet's always been the top guy and unable to be defeated. The new Bloodstrike"—the team will be replaced by a character of that name—"is going to go after Prophet and basically kick Prophet's ass."

Liefeld urges readers to jump on to *Prophet* while it's still in the early stages. "*Prophet*'s an epic story that will be continuing for a long time. Both the book and the character are going to go through lots of stages, which will be told in many story arcs. I'm really excited about [the] direction *Prophet* is heading, and it's going to be a long and fun ride getting there." ☆

Greg McElhatton is a freelance writer who is currently attending James Madison University in Virginia. When not under siege by 17th century poets, he is an assistant sysop for the Comics RoundTable and the TSR Online RoundTable on the GEnie computer network.

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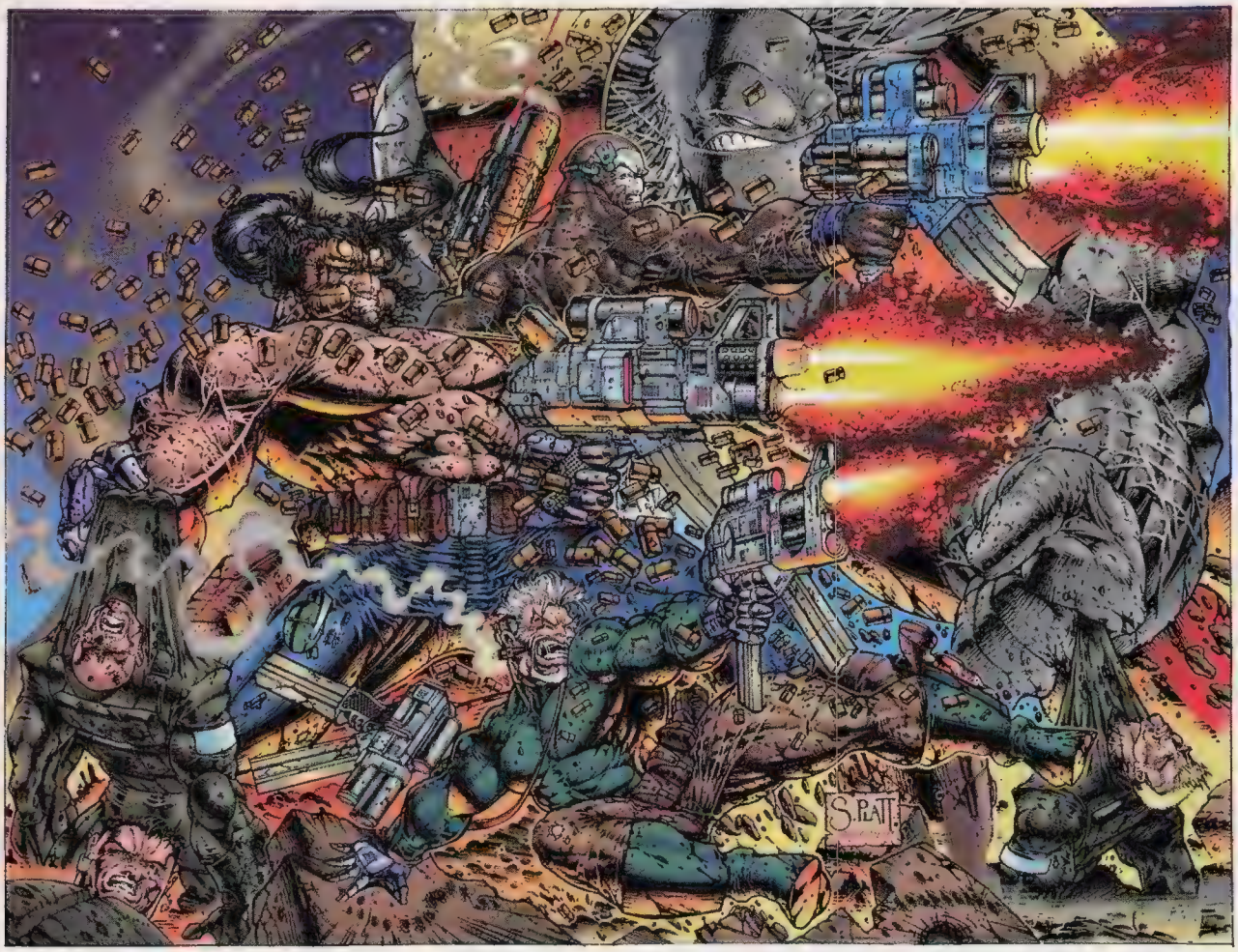
CONTEST

Prophet Goes S.Platt!

As soon as you saw Platt's name, you probably thought you'd stumbled onto the Top 10 Comics department by mistake. But no sir, mister, what you're lookin' at here is the Extreme/*Wizard* Prophet contest, one of the coolest contests we've ever run. What do ya hafta do to win? Well, before we go into that, take a look-see at what we're coughin' up as prizes...



Grand Prize (One winner)

An original framed Prophet sketch by Stephen Platt! This is it, baby: a one-of-a-kind piece of art by one of the industry's most popular artists, and it's yours! (If you win, anyway.)

Second Prize (Five winners)

A *Prophet* #4A (rare Stephen Platt cover) signed by Stephen Platt, a *Youngblood* #2 (Prophet's first appearance) signed by Rob Liefeld, and a *Prophet* #1A (Gold Edition) signed by Dan Panosian!

Third Prize (10 winners)

Prophet #1-#4 signed by Dan Panosian and *Prophet* #4A signed by Stephen Platt!

Fourth Prize (40 winners)

A *Prophet* #5 signed by Stephen Platt!

Fifth Prize (45 winners)

A *Prophet* #1 signed by Dan Panosian!

GRAND PRIZE SKETCH

PRETTY NEAT, HUH? YEAH, WE THOUGHT SO TOO. THE WAY TO WIN ONE OF THOSE JUICY PRIZES IS TO TAKE YOUR FIRST STEP ON THE ROAD TO INSANITY BY DOING WHAT NO MAN, WOMAN, OR BEAST SHOULD EVER ATTEMPT TO DO:

COUNT THE SHELLS!

(THESE THINGS)>

YUP, TO BE ELIGIBLE TO WIN, YOU GOTTA SIT DOWN AND COUNT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE SHELL CASINGS FLYIN' AROUND IN THE COVER ART (SHOWN IN ALL ITS VIOLENT GLORY ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE). THEN GO GET FITTED FOR GLASSES.

SOOO...ONCE YOU'VE COMPLETED THAT TASK, WHERE SHOULD YOU SEND YOUR ENTRY? (OR, IF YOU'VE COMPLETED IT AND CLAWED YOUR EYES OUT, WHERE SHOULD YOUR NURSE SEND YOUR ENTRY?) WHY, SEND IT TO:

Prophet Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Better start countin'—this has gotta get where it's goin' by July 15!

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Extreme Studios and their immediate families (especially that Platt guy! If he wants a Prophet sketch, let him go draw his own). Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the number of shell casings depicted on the Prophet picture on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Prophet Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. And hey, tell me Platt doesn't draw the coolest Prophet! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 15, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on July 18, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after August 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Prophet Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

PROPHET ™ & © ROB LIEFELD.

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 15, 1994!

CONTEST

Prophet

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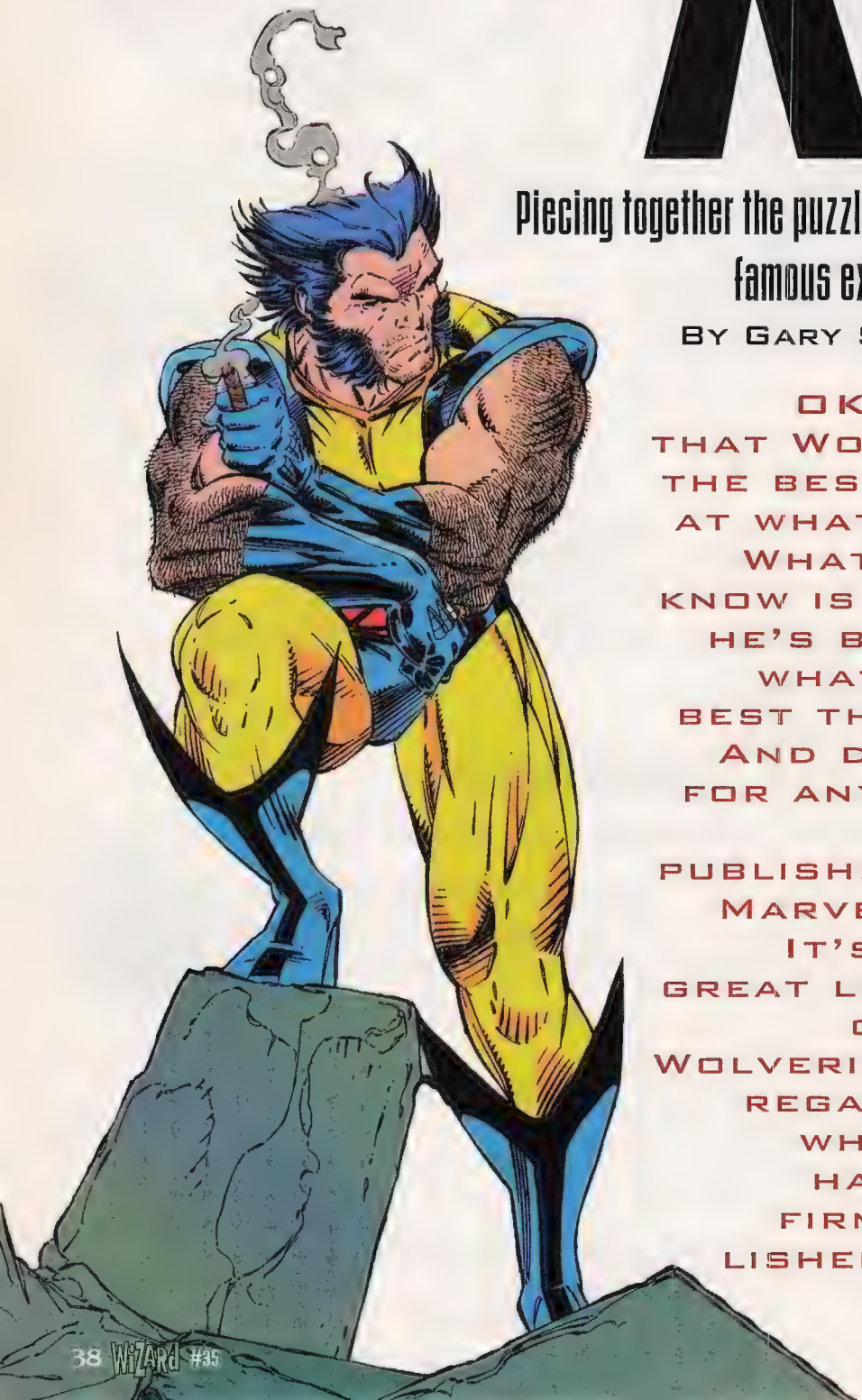
PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE) _____

Number of shell casings: _____

The Weapon X Files

Piecing together the puzzling past of Marvel's famous ex-X-Man, Wolverine

By Gary St. Lawrence



OK, we know that Wolverine is the best there is at what he does. What we don't know is how long he's been doing what he's the best there is at. And don't look for any answers from his publisher, mighty Marvel Comics. It's going to great lengths to convolute Wolverine's past, regardless of what has or hasn't been firmly established to date.

We all know that Wolverine debuted as a guest star in *The Incredible Hulk* #180-#182, wherein he joined the green Goliath in defeating the rampaging mystical yeti known as the Wendigo. At that time, Wolverine gloated readily about the deadliness of his adamantium claws and spouted a version of the aforementioned catchphrase about being the best. In his trademark yellow-and-blue togs, Wolverine seemed in his debut to be an already established and experienced superbeing. Not only did we not know if he was a hero or villain, there was absolutely no mention of the "M" word to indicate Wolverine's place among the mutants.

But Wolverine, also known as Logan, was around long before that fateful introduction in 1974. He danced with wolves on the American frontier, faced civil warriors in 1937 Spain, fought Nazis and ninjas alongside Captain America in World War II-torn Madripoor, and undertook enough Cold War spy missions to give James Bond an inferiority complex.

The Dispute

But now we're told that all is not what it once appeared to be: Wolverine has been the victim of incredibly intricate and impossibly complex mind control, namely, memory implants. Now nobody, not even his current writers, will (or can) say for certain which of Logan's adventures are real and which were implanted.

Essentially, the memory implants are an easy way for Marvel to spark new interest in Wolverine. And so the man who once appeared to be a mysterious, centuries-old enigma is now a hapless pawn and government dupe who will second-guess every instinct he has and every decision he makes—and get his hide waxed by second-raters he once wouldn't have given a "snikt" about.

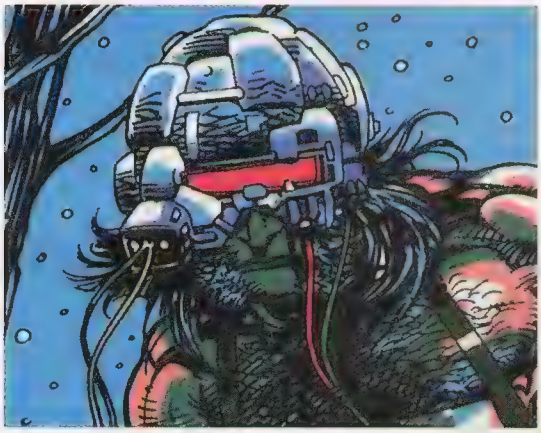
How do the creators who shaped Wolverine's life feel about these developments?

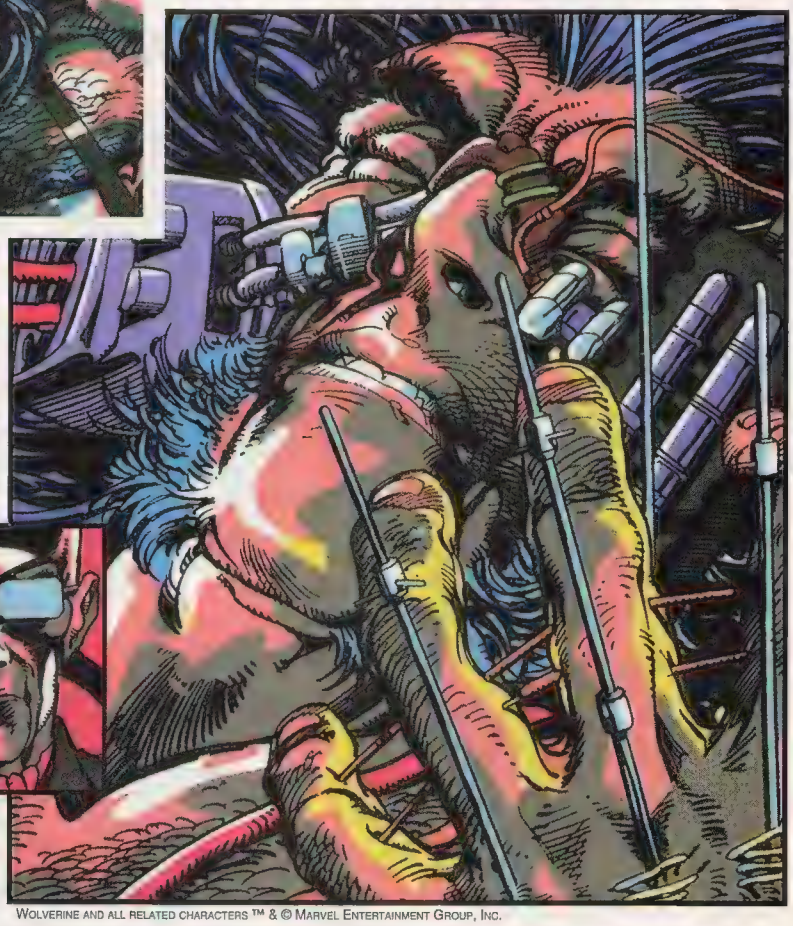
Barry Windsor-Smith, the author and illustrator of "Weapon X," which ran in *Marvel Comics Presents* #72-#84, disputes that Logan's memories are false. In "Weapon X," Windsor-Smith says, he initially wanted to incorporate several hints as to exactly when Logan acquired his unique skeletal structure, thereby establishing a definite chronological anchor point in his life. Although the year is never explicitly stated in the story, various clues indicate that it's set in 1964.

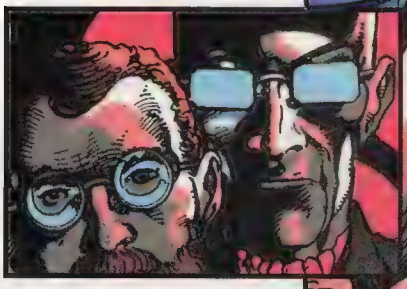
But Larry Hama, who runs Logan through his paces in the monthly *Wolverine* series, challenges Windsor-Smith's "definitive origin" and says that he feels relatively free to do with the character's history as he sees fit. "Nearly every writer who has worked on a character with the longevity that Wolverine has had will emphasize certain elements from that character's history while staying away from elements that don't appeal to that particular writer," Hama said in *Wizard* #19. He added that he would "acknowledge parts of 'Weapon X' when they are necessary in telling my story."

Hama took the elements he liked from "Weapon X" and knitted them into a secret spy experiment conducted under the auspices of a Cold War Canadian government. Hama's take on "Weapon X" is that Wolverine was the prototype for a whole slew of differently powered superspies controlled by Department H. Department H has been depicted as the Canadian government's equivalent of the CIA, FBI, and NASA. It is sometimes shady, often paramilitary, and always secretive.

But Logan's memories of his bygone Bond-like days are suspect due to the "memory implants" about which we've since learned. Even he can't tell fantasy from reality.

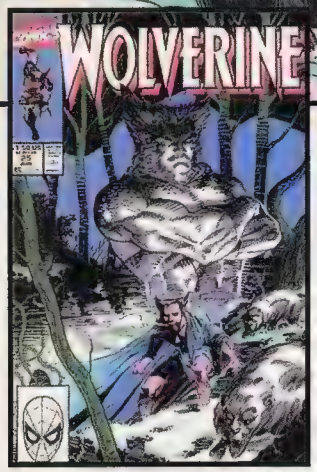




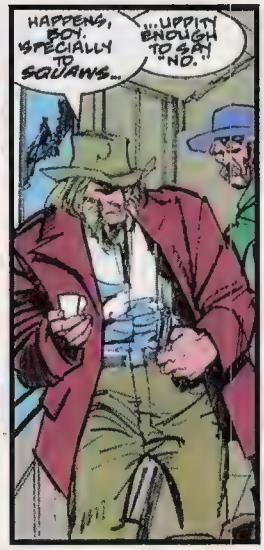


Weapon X: perhaps the only thing more painful than braces. This program, masterminded by Dr. Cornelius and the Professor (below), gave Logan his adamantium bones and claws.

Wolverine and all related characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc.



Raised by wolverines??!! That's what they imply in Wolverine #25



With friends (relatives?) like Sabretooth, who needs enemies?

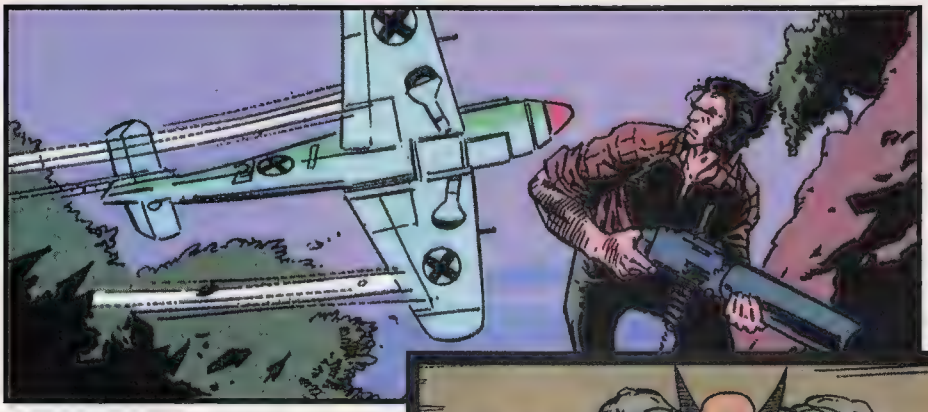
Pre-20th Century

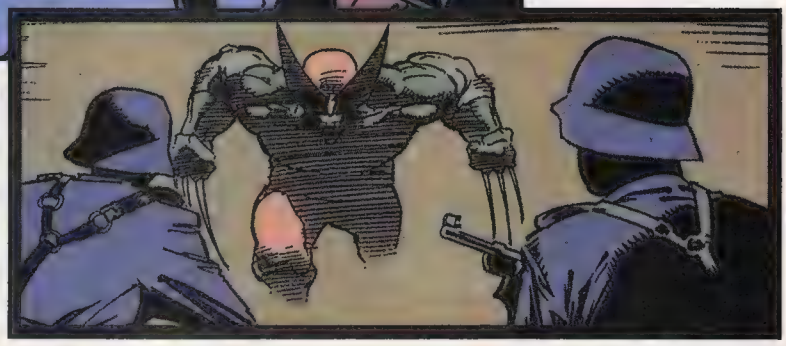
Logan has seen action in the wild west and ancient east, as both cowboy and Indian, Occidental and Oriental. Many of these adventures unfolded in *Marvel Comics Presents* and *Wolverine* (ongoing series).

The earliest tale from the standpoint of Wolverine's life is probably *Wolverine* #25's "Heir Aid." In this story, we meet a very young, perhaps even prepubescent, boy who looks like Logan, although the name "Logan" is never used. (In fact, it wasn't revealed until *X-Men* [vol. 1] #103 in 1982, some eight years after Wolverine's premiere.) The boy, suffering from amnesia, is terrified, wandering alone in the Canadian wilderness after being "cast out by his people because he was small and weak." Wolverine, in his Patch persona, narrates the tale and reveals that the boy's father was the leader of his people, although we never learn who those people are. This unnamed father cast the young boy out "because he was a coward and useless, and the boy believed his people were right about him."

"Wild Frontier," from issues #93-#98 of *Marvel Comics Presents*, shows us a 30ish, preclaws Logan dancing with wolves as an adopted member of a Blackfoot tribe in the 1840s. He calls this "the never time, the dreamtime," and tries to convince himself that the story's events are not really from his past. But the six-part arc by writer Timothy Truman includes references to Logan's possible immortality and to Wolverine's other adventures in and out of the present time stream.

If the chronology in "Wild Frontier" is to be believed, the events of "Heir Aid" could





WOLVERINE WAS BUSY KICKIN' TAIL AND TAKIN' NAMES WAY BACK IN WORLD WAR II.

have occurred in 1820 or earlier. Wolverine himself states that as he grew up among the pack of wolverines that adopted him, he learned that he was "resistant to the weather...and to time." Since we have no idea how slowly he ages, "Heir Aid" may have taken place centuries before "Wild Frontier"!

In *Wolverine* #9-#10, the present-day Wolverine, celebrating his birthday, relates the tale of an earlier birthday, perhaps his 18th. "24 Hours" shows a very early battle between Wolverine and his greatest nemesis, Sabretooth, who admits to having just murdered and possibly raped Wolverine's Native American girlfriend, Silver Fox.

The furnishings, clothing, and language used by the supporting characters indicate a time period such as the Gold Rush days, which would put the tale in the 1850s. Wolverine himself says that the story happens "in the middle of the flamin' frontier." But if the Logan we see in "Wild Frontier" seems to be about 30 and doesn't age normally, then far more than 12 years would separate it and "24 Hours." Perhaps "24 Hours" is set way back in the 1800s!

The history between Sabretooth and Wolverine, as evidenced by Sabretooth's constant taunting and references to their earlier meetings, long predates the frontier battle of "24 Hours." The taunting begins a long line of hints, allegations, and inferences that Wolverine and Sabretooth are much more than enemies—that they are, perhaps, family.

However, the events of "24 Hours" might all be the result of an implanted memory, because subsequent comics revealed that Silver Fox is alive and well years after her purported death.

Although there has yet to be a tale depicting Logan being trained by his Oriental mentor, Ogun, we're told that he spent a significant amount of time studying Japan's martial arts, philosophy, history, and culture—enough to spout ancient Japanese proverbs at the drop of a hat. This training is expanded upon in the *Kitty Pryde and Wolverine* mini-series, but its place in the time stream is never detailed.

There is scores of evidence—photographs, literature, and various statements made by people who were present at some point in Logan's past—that Logan was alive before 1700. But because so many of those references to Wolverine's past have been contradicted by subsequent stories and statements by Marvel writers and editors, to list or chronicle all those which weren't complete narratives would only confound an already confounded issue.

1901-1950

Logan's next chronological appearance places him in Spain in 1937. "Blood and Claws" (*Wolverine* #35-#37) begins with Logan and Puck, the dwarfish member of Alpha Flight, the Canadian government-sponsored superteam, being attacked by Lady Deathstrike, a murderous cybernetic construct. Lady Deathstrike hates Wolverine because she believes he stole the adamantium-bonding process from her father, Lord Dark Wind.

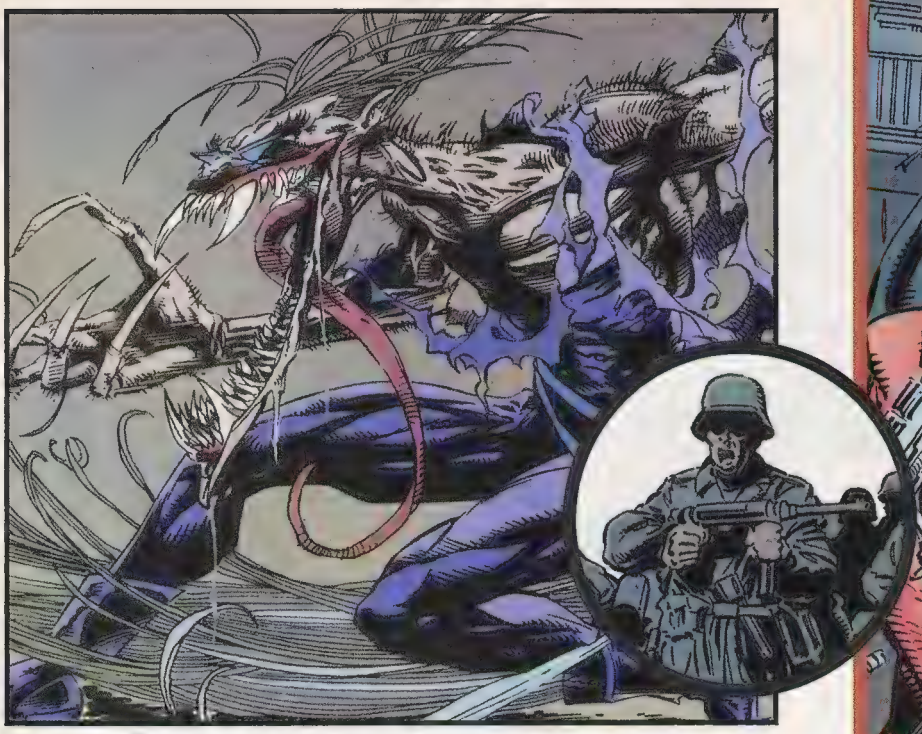
Wolverine, Lady Deathstrike, and Puck are somehow cast back to 1937 Spain by the aboriginal mutant Gateway. Wolverine and Puck literally remember things that haven't happened yet—although Puck doesn't remember Logan being present!

Wolverine retains his brown-and-gold costume and his adamantium claws, despite being placed decades before his skeleton was bonded to adamantium. Puck, however, expands to normal human size. "Howzit Puck changed back to his 1937 self and I didn't?" Wolverine wonders to himself.

So did any of it actually happen? Logan thinks so. Since he, Puck, and Lady Deathstrike were all in Spain together and all remember the same events, one must assume that either it actually occurred or all three have been subjected to memory implants.

"Madripoor Nights" (*Uncanny X-Men* #268) is set in the late summer of 1941 on the fictional Pacific island of Madripoor, Wolverine's favorite foreign playground. A preclaw Logan—he doesn't call himself Wolverine—teams up with a novice Captain America to fight the band of ninja assassins known as the Hand and a murderous Nazi named Baron Strucker (later to be a longtime Captain America nemesis). In this story, Logan has intimate knowledge of ninja techniques, training, and history and is able to speak Japanese. He demonstrates his mastery of a katana by deftly slicing through Captain America's wrist bindings with a single stroke but proudly boasts of being Canadian as he kicks a Nazi staff car driver.

The Logan in "Madripoor Nights" is a much more confident, knowledgeable, and disciplined warrior than the brash 18-year-old of "24 Hours," which indicates that a number of years have passed between that epic battle with Sabretooth and the covert clash with Baron Strucker and the Hand. Yet



Logan appears to be about 30 (still) and he states that he's had a long-standing grudge against the Hand (dating from his training with Ogun, perhaps?).

In *Wolverine* #34, in which Wolverine battles a wild man-beast known in the Canadian tundra as "the Hunter in Darkness," Logan encounters an aging Mountie named Doolin. The pair engage in a desperate nighttime hunt for a murderer named Athabasca Ike who has kidnapped a teenage girl. As they chase Ike—and fend off the Hunter in Darkness—Doolin recalls a similar night in Ranville, Normandy: June 6, 1944, on the eve of D-Day, when Doolin was 18 and serving in the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion. Doolin recalls the bravery of his platoon corporal, whose name he can't remember. The 35ish corporal made a strong impression on the young soldier—strong enough for Wolverine to remind Doolin of his fellow soldier some 45 years later.

Doolin is fatally shot by Ike, but not before remembering how he shot something he thought was the Hunter in Darkness in an incident many years ago—and not before realizing that Wolverine, the corporal, and the mysterious man he mistook for the Hunter are all one the same. Doolin remembers his corporal's name on the verge of death: his last word is "Logan." "How did he know my name?" Wolverine wonders.

In *Wolverine* #78, Wolverine battles the crazed vampiric villain known as Bloodscream. Before the fight, Bloodscream, the German army *Oberleutnant* in "The Hunter in Darkness," says that he met Wolverine on the same night Doolin did in 1944. Bloodscream, needing the blood of "a man who ageth not" for a potion that will extend his own existence, connects the Wolverine of today to the Canadian Army corporal who nearly killed him that night in 1944. These stories, written by Larry Hama four years apart, directly state that the three Logans are the same and visually suggest that Logan had roughly the same physical appearance in 1944, 1969, and 1990.

1951-1973

Logan appears to have been fairly inactive during the 1950s and even more secretive than usual. There are vague testaments to his having been around to see Elvis Presley first burst onto the rock 'n' roll scene, Japan's reconstruction after World War II, the Korean War (his activities during which remain curiously undocumented thus far), and the death of Buddy Holly. It's also been suggested that he was somehow involved in the Communist witch hunts led by Senator Joseph McCarthy.

There have also been endless indications that Logan was directly involved in Cold War espionage activities as both a government operative and mercenary/assassin. Though we've only seen his 1960s missions so far, we can safely assume that he spent much of the 1950s training for espionage, although the government he was being trained to serve is still unknown.

In the story arc running through *X-Men* (vol. 2) #4-#7, we learn a great deal about Logan's activities in the 1960s, particularly his service with the CIA and the Canadian government. The story suggests that Logan was indeed a high-level operative "30 years ago" (i.e.,

IF YOU THINK IT'S WEIRD THAT WOLVERINE IS AT LEAST A HUNDRED YEARS OLD, WHAT ABOUT ALL HIS MYSTERIOUS ENEMIES? BLOODSCREAM (TOP LEFT AND INSET) MAY BE AS OLD AS WOLVERINE, BUT HE HASN'T AGED AS WELL.

WOLVERINE SIGNED ON WITH THE X-MEN (TOP), RAN INTO MAGNETO ON A BAD DAY (ABOVE), AND HAD THE ADAMANTIUM YANKED FROM HIS BONES...WHICH ARE NOW QUITE BREAKABLE...OUCH! (RIGHT)

1962). We see a preclaw Logan team with Sabretooth and Maverick, who, like Wolverine and Sabretooth, were also Weapon X products.

That's right: Wolverine isn't the sole Weapon X readers thought he was. The Weapon X project, it turns out, was the supposedly ultrasecret Canadian government attempt by Department H to create the ultimate weapon/agent.

The *X-Men* arc also contains Silver Fox—the woman who was "killed" decades before but turns up in the present day as an agent of Hydra. Wolverine goes up against Omega Red, yet another mutant government spy whom he apparently battled regularly in the 1960s. Omega Red has a "death touch" mutant ability; only a warped version of Wolverine's healing factor preserves him from it. Also on hand for this arc is Dr. Abraham B. Cornelius, the same Dr. Cornelius who laced Logan's bones with adamantium in "Weapon X"—which its author says took place in 1964.

Suggestions and outright statements that these teammates were covert agents in 1961 are peppered throughout this arc. The fact that these memories are shared by virtually everyone involved is a clear indication that Logan's recollection of that time is at least partially genuine.

Wolverine #61-#65 further explores Wolverine's early years and is laced with insinuations that Wolverine, Sabretooth, Silver Fox, and Maverick were given some kind of immortality treatment that further retarded their already curiously slow aging. (Whether this "treatment" is related to the Infinity Formula that S.H.I.E.L.D. Director Nick Fury drank to extend his life span has yet to be revealed.)

This arc also introduces Aldo Ferro, a very powerful psychic who was the source of many of the alleged memory implants. Ferro clouded the memories of Wolverine, Sabretooth, Silver Fox and Maverick so they wouldn't recall their covert activities. Ferro disappears before the story's end, but he might reappear now that Wolverine is making his way across the highways and byways of North America, seeking answers to his many questions.

This brings us to 1964, supposedly the setting of "Weapon X." Since the adamantium bonding process is said to have taken more than 18 months, we know that Logan effectively became Wolverine in 1965.

Uncanny X-Men #154 guest stars Carol Danvers, who turns out to have been an agent for the CIA—an American counterpart to Logan who recalls dealing with him "back in the '60s." (Danvers's own history is murky, too; it seemed that no one was willing to give her a definitive history until she was brought in to clear up Wolverine's own.) If Danvers can be trusted, then the spy adventures in the *Wolverine* and *X-Men* books either really happened—or are the product of still more false memory implants.

Logan became the Canadian government's leading operative as Weapon X. It's only logical to assume that some time, perhaps years, passed during which Logan was

once again recruited, trained, and seasoned for government service.

Some time after that period, Wolverine, amnesiac after being memory-drained by Ferro and nearly reverted to his basest animal persona, was found by Weapon X Project Leader James MacDonald Hudson and his wife Heather, as detailed in *Alpha Flight* #33 and #34. (However, these events may have taken place immediately after the conclusion of "Weapon X.") The Hudsons took Wolverine under their care in their wilderness cabin (they were apparently taking a sabbatical from Department H to enjoy a delayed honeymoon) and nursed him back to humanity over an undisclosed period of time.

Wolverine already had his claws and adamantium skeleton at this time, clearly indicating a post-"Weapon X" time. Through the Hudsons' sponsorship, Logan became a soldier and secret agent for Canada's government. At this time, Logan first became—in name as well as personality—the Wolverine. Wolverine was to be trained and groomed to be the leader of Alpha Flight, but left that post in rebellion against the government's attempts to control not only his missions but his personal life as well.

1974-1992

Several years presumably passed between the end of "Weapon X" and Wolverine's full debut in *Incredible Hulk* #181. In *Giant-Size X-Men* #1, Wolverine severed his association with Canada's Department H and joined the X-Men at the invitation of Professor Xavier, a move that would prove to be the most cataclysmic and life-changing experience he would ever endure. This departure was not well-received by his northern teammates or superiors, as was described in several subsequent issues of *X-Men*. In #109, Wolverine battled Hudson, who then led Alpha Flight as the Vindicator.

In *X-Men* (vol. 1) #120-#121, Wolverine was captured by Alpha Flight; Department H felt too much time, money, and effort had gone into building Weapon X to let him leave. Interestingly enough, Sasquatch, Alpha Flight's orange-furred behemoth, calls Wolverine "Captain Logan," implying that Logan has been promoted since his corporal days in the Canadian military.

Wolverine remained a team player with the X-Men without mentioning much about his non-Xavier activities until *X-Men* (vol. 1) #139-#140, when Wolverine, after battling the full contingent of Alpha Flight's heroes, made his peace with old team and the Canadian government and returned to the X-Men.

Wolverine served with the X-Men from this point forward. The character's popularity grew to its now enormous proportions.

1993 AND BEYOND

Undeniably, the most catastrophic event in Wolverine's life—at least since he underwent the adamantium-bonding process—took place in *X-Men* #25, in which Magneto literally pulled the adamantium out from Logan's body through the pores of his skin.

Which brings us to this year's greatest Wolverine mystery: since we see in *Wolverine* #75 that he now has claws of bone, the question remains whether Logan has had claws all along, however many decades ago, or if his body simply adapted to the adamantium claws after so many years of use and replaced his artificial claws with natural bone claws.

In *Wolverine* #80, Dr. Jaime Munoz (a molecular biologist) explains that Wolverine's healing factor and the adamantium are intertwined and that his mutant genes are what made the bonding process possible. Also, Dr. Munoz says the process can be duplicated...if they can get a sample of Wolverine's DNA. (Could this be a hint of the story in the upcoming *Wolverine* #100?)

So just how old is our Mr. Logan? Is he really immortal? Or has he simply been a pawn in an incredible plot? Only time and Marvel will tell. The real question is, will any of us be alive when they do? ☆

Gary St. Lawrence is a 30-year-old author, journalist, and technical writer and a 22-year veteran collector of comics. He would've written this article from memory, but, see, he's had all these implants...

WOLVERINE BIDS FAREWELL TO JUBILEE AND THE X-MEN, AND SEEMINGLY CLOSES THE DOOR ON THIS CHAPTER OF HIS LIFE.

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CONTEST Wolverine

WOLVERINE: HE'S THE BEST AT WHAT HE DOES. BUT IN THIS AWESOME CONTEST, *YOU* HAVE TO BE THE BEST THERE IS TO WIN THE DEBUT OF MARVEL'S ORIGINAL BERSERKER HERO, WOLVERINE!

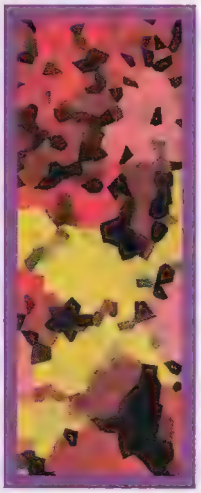
Grand Prize (One winner)

As in battle, there can only be one winner. In this case, that winner will walk away with three of the most sought-after comics on the market today: *Incredible Hulk* #180-#182, the three-part story that introduced the most popular X-Man of all time, Wolverine!

PRETTY NEAT, HUH? WELL, TO WIN THOSE THREE COMIC TREASURES, YOU GOTTA USE YOUR KEEN EYESIGHT TO IDENTIFY AND NAME THE SIX WOLVERINE SUPPORTING CAST CHARACTERS PICTURED BELOW. SOUND SIMPLE? NO WAY. WE'VE MESSED WITH THESE PICTURES TO HIDE THE CHARACTERS' IDENTITIES, AND ONLY THOSE WITH SHARP ENOUGH SENSES WILL BE ABLE TO FIGURE 'EM OUT.

EACH OF THE SIX CHARACTERS DEPICTED BELOW HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN WOLVERINE'S LIFE. TO BE ELIGIBLE TO WIN THIS HERE CONTEST, YOU GOTTA FIGURE OUT WHO'S WHO!

PANEL 1


PANEL 2

PANEL 3

PANEL 4

PANEL 5

PANEL 6

IF YOU'RE UP TO IT, FILL OUT THE ENTRY FORM BELOW, WRITE DOWN THE NAMES OF THE SIX WOLVERINE SUPPORTING CAST CHARACTERS (REAL NAMES OR CODE NAMES ARE FINE), AND MAIL THE WHOLE FLAMIN' THING OFF TO:

Wolverine Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Move it or lose it—this sucker's gotta get where it's goin' by July 15, 1994!

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and that jerk Magneto who pulled all the J-U-ice out of my boy Logan. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the names of the characters depicted in the six panels on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Wolverine Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 15, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on July 18, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For the name of the winner, available after August 15, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Wolverine Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch future issues of *Wizard*!

Congratulations
to the winners of *Wizard* #31's Legend contest! (Answer: *Apollyon*)
Grand Prize *(original piece of jam art by the seven Legend founders): Toby Craig, Huntsville, TX*
Second Prize: *Joe Stefanac, Cleveland, OH*
Third Prize: *Mitchell B. Craig, Lancaster, SC; Thomas Patrick, West Wilton, NH; Michael Pedersen, El Cajon, CA; Anthony Seid, Brooklyn, NY; Aaron Sowd, Nevada City, CA; Mark Spaude, Placentia, CA*
And congratulations to the other 37 Legend contest winners!

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CONTEST
Wolverine

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 15, 1994!

I am:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) _____ AGE _____

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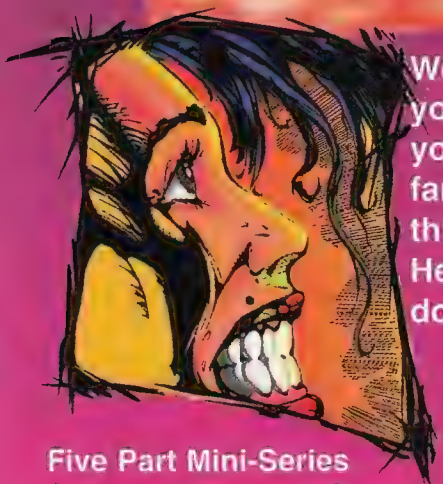
Panel 1 _____ Panel 4 _____
Panel 2 _____ Panel 5 _____
Panel 3 _____ Panel 6 _____

REALITY IS ONLY AN ILLUSION...



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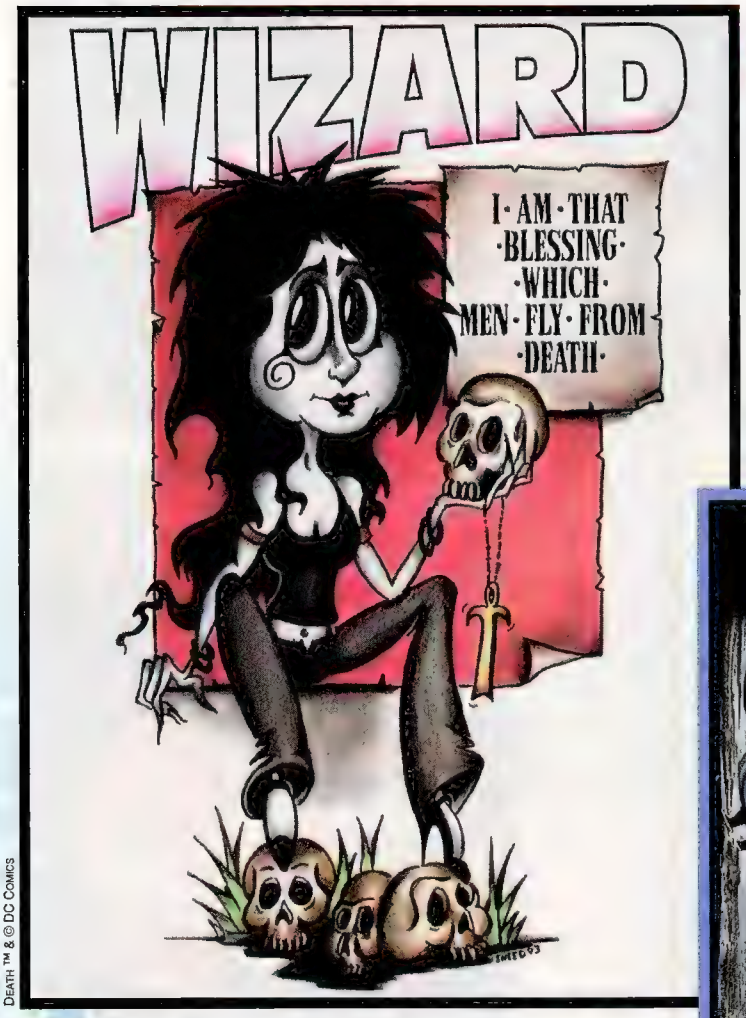
the Drawing board

The showcase of comic book fan art.

The 10 people whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will receive a *Supreme* #1 signed by Brian Murray, a *Bloodstrike* #1 signed by Dan Fraga, and a *WildStar* #1 signed by Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway. The four runners-up will receive a *Catwoman* #1 signed by Jim Balent, an *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada, and a Gold *Shadowman* #0. The artist of the winning entry this month will receive a *Spawn* #13 signed by Todd McFarlane, a *Gambit* #1 signed by Howard Mackie and Lee Weeks, a *Batman* #500 signed by Joe Quesada, a *Turok* #1 signed by Bart Sears, and a 30th anniversary Spider-Man hologram set. Congratulations to all!

Special thanks to Dynamic Forces for their generous donation of autographed comic books. You guys are the stick that stirs the coffee!



DEATH ™ & © DC COMICS

1st Place!

DEATH
By F. Dean Sneed
Northglenn, CO

BATMAN
By Marco Peixoto
Lisboa, Portugal

BATMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

RUNNER-UP

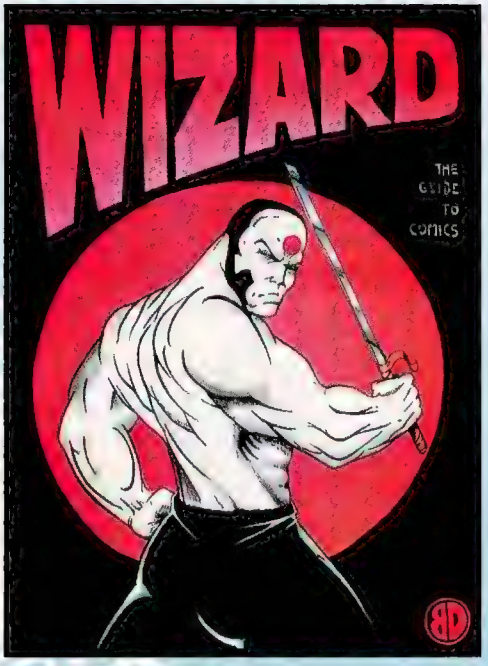
MANTRA
By Joey Guajardo
San Antonio, TX

HORRIDUS
By Melly Curphy
San Antonio, TX

RAI
By Ben Drolet
Salem, NH

Mantra ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.

Horridus ™ & © Erik Larsen



Rai ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

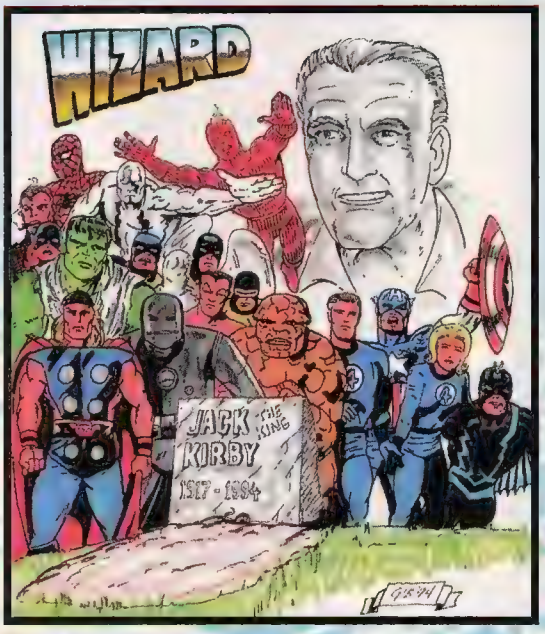
Doomsday ™ & © DC Comics

RUNNER-UP

DOOMSDAY
By Jas Ingram
Stockbridge, GA

JOKERSPAWN
By Chris Eimer
Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada

THE KING
By J.H. Gibson
Somerset, KY



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RUNNER-UP

PITT & POOF
By William D. Johnson
Valdosta, GA

VAMPIRELLA
By Melvin R. Ylagan
Flushing, NY

SPAWN & WANDA
By Aston Roy Cover
Plantation, FL

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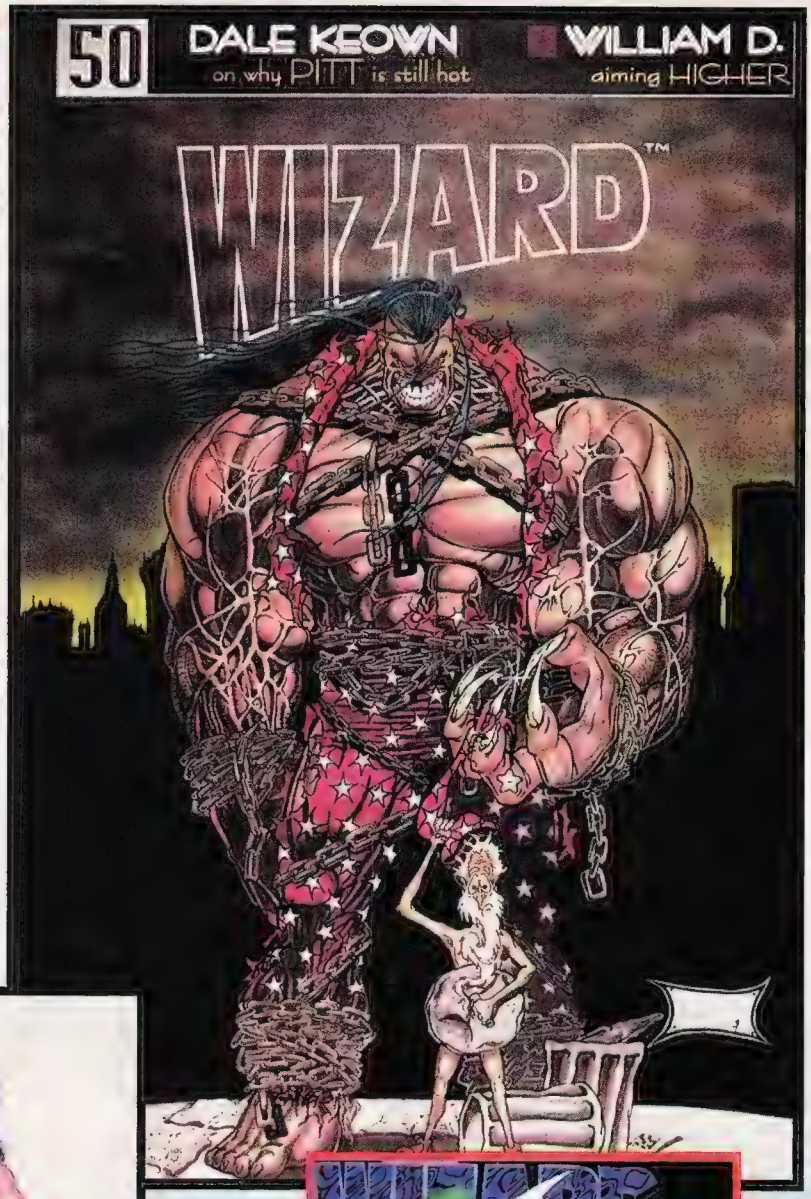

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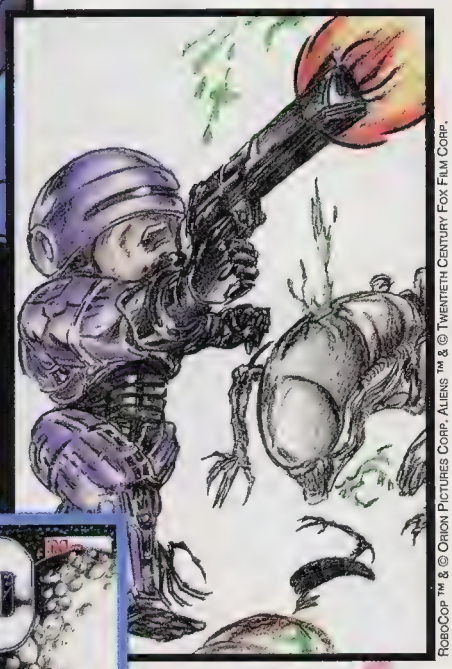
Batman ™ & © DC Comics

RUNNER-UP

BATMAN
By Jairo Paez & Carlos Rivas
Bogota, Colombia



RoboCop ™ & © Orion Pictures Corp. Aliens ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

ROBOCOP VS. ALIENS
By Wilfredo Tan
Quezon City, Philippines

WOLVERINE
By Marc Harris
Burnsville, MN

CZAR VS. THE BONEDEMON
By Joe Montaño
Tucson, AZ

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:

The Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

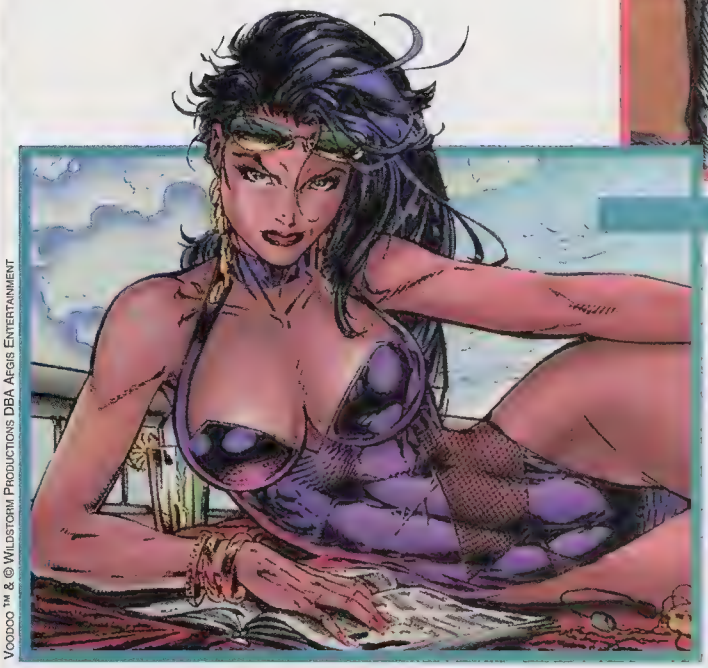
SCHISM™
DEFIANT

Hunk—SANDMAN

It's a pretty chilly night from the looks of it. Morpheus might want to hike up his li'l wrap there, at least up to his bellybutton. (I never would've guessed he was an innie.) Anyway, DC's smooth alabaster-skinned, permed embodiment of Dream has himself a pretty decent build there. On top of his rock-hard tummy (you could bounce yogurt offa that belly!) and broad shoulders, he's also one of those rugged he-man types. I mean, to clasp your cape latch onto the flesh of your right shoulder—geez, that's gotta sting just a little!

SANDMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

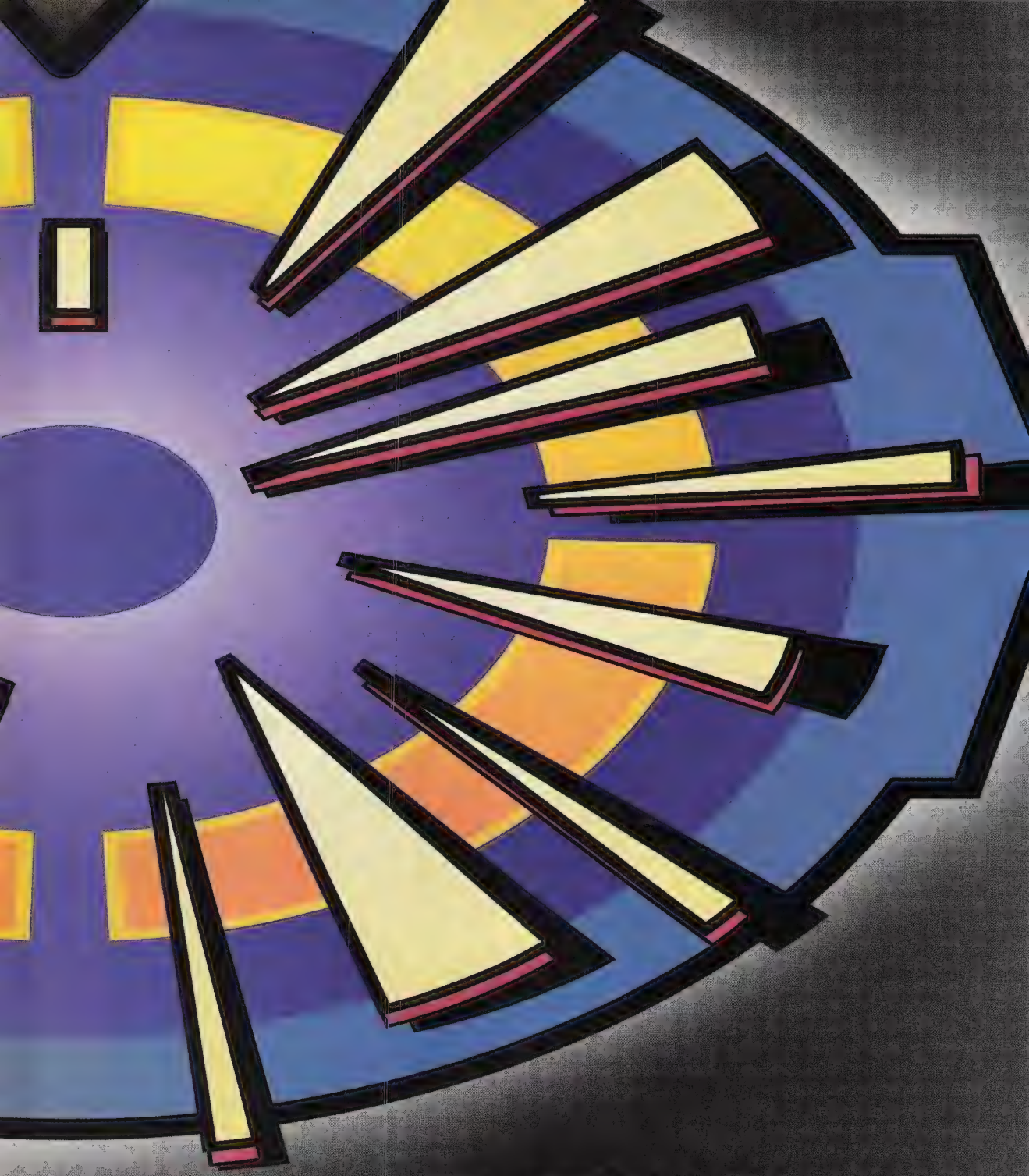
Babe—VOODOO



VOODOO ™ & © WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS DBA AEGIS ENTERTAINMENT

If you can judge a bathing suit by how little of it there is, then we give a big thumbs up for Voodoo's awesome swimwear. (I wonder if it's standard issue for the WildC.A.T.s women.) So aside from stopping beach volleyball games in mid-volley just by walking by, what's Voodoo's superpower? This hot babe has the ability to manipulate people's minds so they do whatever she wants 'em to. Dressed like that, she could get most guys to do what she wanted without ever using that funky power. C'mon—if you met her at the beach and she asked you real nice to drop a lobster down the front of your suit, you'd drop two just to impress her (and maybe even some crabs, too). ☆

SHE-HULK & WONDER MAN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.



THE END OF TODAY...

ZERO HOUR™

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CONTEST

Something to Crow About!

DUE TO ALL THE PUBLICITY AND HYPE SURROUNDING THE RELEASE OF MIRAMAX'S *THE CROW*, BASED ON JAMES O'BARR'S COMIC OF THE SAME NAME, KITCHEN SINK PRESS AND WIZARD PRESS HAVE COOKED UP THIS BE-ALL END-ALL CROW CONTEST. DON'T BELIEVE US? HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN WIN:

THE CROW ™ & © J. O'BARR.

Grand Prize (One winner)

One lucky fan wins an original piece of framed Crow art signed by its artist, Crow creator James O'Barr!

Second Prize (Five winners)

Five fans make off with a limited edition Crow print (*only 500 exist!*) signed by James O'Barr!

Third Prize (Five winners)

The Crow graphic novel signed by James O'Barr!

Fourth Prize (20 winners)

The Crow graphic novel and a *Crow* movie T-shirt!

Fifth Prize (25 winners)

An official *Crow* movie "teaser" poster!

QUITE THE COOL LIST OF PRIZES, EH? TO ENTER, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FILL OUT THE COUPON BELOW AND MAIL IT OFF TO:

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Don't drag your feet: this coupon's gotta get where it's going by June 30, 1994!

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and that T Bird punk. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to The Crow Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 30, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on July 1, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners, available after August 15, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Crow Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch future issues of *Wizard*!

CONTEST

The Crow

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BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH **BART SEARS**

How do you do, and welcome to Brutes & Babes. This month we continue our in-depth look at drawing comics with some of the most fun, most essential bits of information you could ever put into your art-hungry head. This month, we're going to talk about...

ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

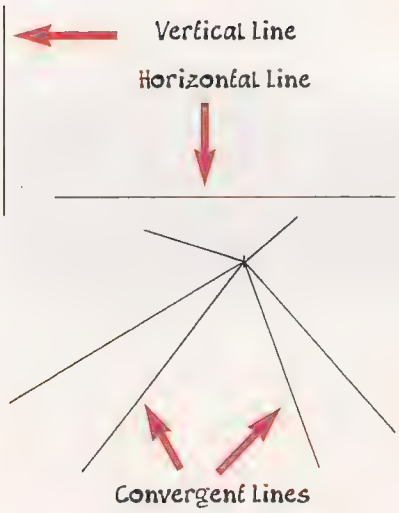
SECTION 1:

There are basically three types of lines in one-point perspective; that's all you'll ever need to draw. They are vertical lines, horizontal lines, and converging lines. Let's look at the definitions of these three things and then move on from there...

Horizontal: parallel to the plane of the horizon; level. **Vertical:** in a position or direction perpendicular to the plane of the horizon; upright. **Convergent:** tending to meet in a point; tending to a common result.

Basically, that's it. You master those three lines and you can do one-point perspective. (Actually, if you master converging lines, you can also do two- and three-point perspective—but we'll get to that in later issues.)

We're starting with the simple basics—types of lines—and we'll build from there. You'll need more than one teacher, though: you need to start actively thinking about perspective, to start looking at the streets on which you walk, the rooms in which you sit, the pictures at which you look. Try to pick out the perspective, try to find the vanishing points on the horizon lines; if you do that, it'll make it a lot easier for you in the long run.

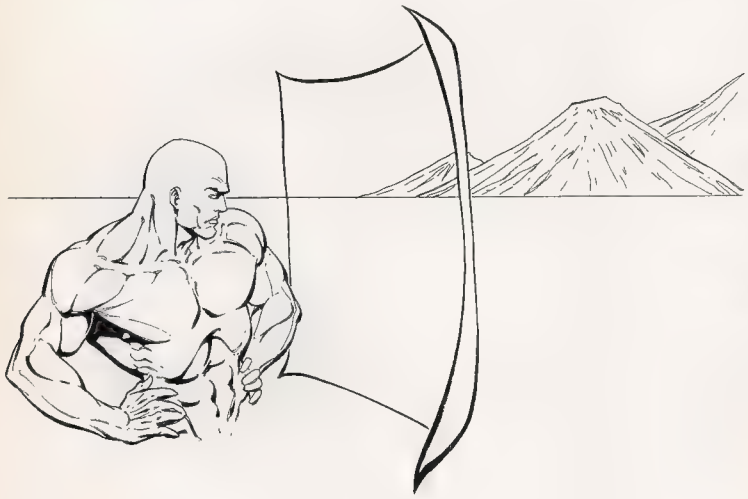


SECTION 2: HORIZON LINES

As you've probably guessed, the horizon is related to horizontal lines. The horizon is the line or circle which forms the apparent boundary between earth and sky.

Note the picture. Note the viewer. You will never see the viewer in any drawing other than those used to explain perspective, like this one. The viewer is an imaginary person, created by the illustrator, who is looking at the scene the illustrator is illustrating. (Now *that's* a mouthful!)

It's important to remember that the viewer is *not you*. Anyone looking at a picture is looking at a snapshot of what the viewer (the imaginary spectator) has seen. Note that the horizon line of any illustration runs directly through the viewer's line of sight, i.e. his eyeball. The point of view of any given illustration can be high, low, or right in the middle. With a high viewpoint, you tend to look down on things. With a low viewpoint, you tend to look up at things. With a middle viewpoint, you tend to look at things the way most people look at things: straight on.

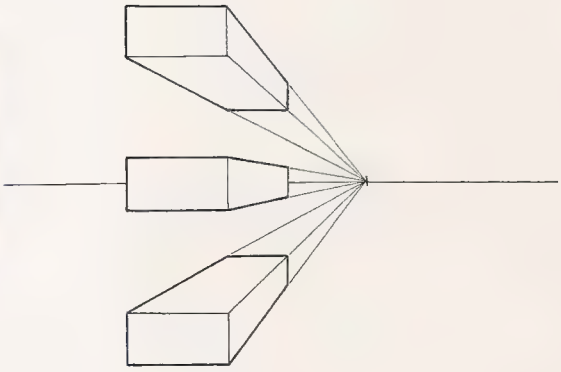


SECTION 3:

Look at the drawing. The viewer (our imaginary friend) looks through a piece of paper which represents the picture plane. Hmmmm, picture plane: there's a new word. **Picture plane:** an imaginary, flat piece of glass through which the (imaginary) viewer looks. Pretend that the image the viewer sees is burned into the glass, and that the glass becomes the illustration.

SECTION 4:

Look at the illustration on the right. Here we have three rectangular boxes of the same size drawn in one-point perspective. One is above the horizon, one is on the horizon line, and one is below the horizon. Try it...

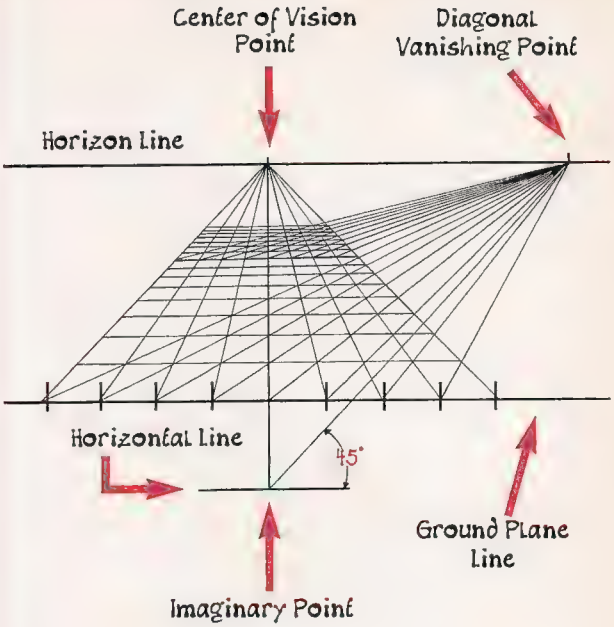


SECTION 5: ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE GRID CONSTRUCTION

First, draw a horizon line. Then pick, and draw, a center-of-vision point on that line and drop a vertical line downwards from that point. Somewhere along this vertical center-of-vision line, draw a horizontal ground plane line. Next, somewhere below the ground plane line and on the vertical center-of-vision line, mark an imaginary point. From your imaginary point, draw a horizontal line (it's the short line on the bottom of the diagram), then measure a 45-degree angle from the junction of the center-of-vision line and the horizontal line (my 45-degree angle is to the right of this junction). Draw a line along this angle, starting from the imaginary point, until it hits the horizon line. The place where this line hits the horizon line is your diagonal vanishing point.

Next, mark off as many equal measures as you need along the ground plane line (I marked off about eight). Project lines from these measures to the diagonal vanishing point as well as to the center-of-vision perspective point. Draw horizontal lines wherever the projected lines cross. This will give you a perfectly even square grid drawn in one-point perspective.

I hope that made sense. This perspective stuff is really quite a tongue-twisting mouthful. But study the drawing and construct one of these grids on your own until it becomes second nature to you.



SECTION 6: MEASUREMENT IN PERSPECTIVE

Study the lovely drawing below. It depicts what we will call a six-foot-tall man standing in the foreground. Behind this man are several other six-foot-tall men, some standing on the ground plane line, some floating above it. They are all in perfect perspective. Look at the diagram—can you see why they're in perspective? Can you see what was done?

Measuring in perspective can be as easy or as difficult as you make it. The measurement that you set for a figure is not dictated to you by the perspective. You can make a figure six feet tall or six inches tall; you just have to be sure to make everything that you draw within that illustration conforms to the figure.

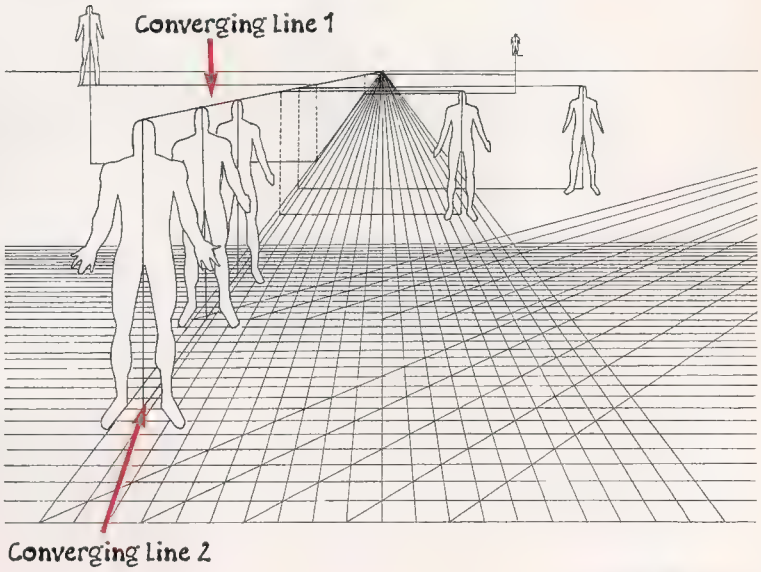
Keeping measurements true in perspective is merely a matter of projecting. For example, to keep a six-foot-high figure six feet high no matter where he stands in the perspective, project one line from the top of his head to the vanishing point and one line from the bottom of his feet to the vanishing point, just like in the picture. These lines will be known as Converging Lines 1 and 2. Any upright figure you draw which has the bottom of its feet on the lower converging line (Line 2) and the top of its head on the upper converging line (Line 1) is six feet tall in the correct perspective.

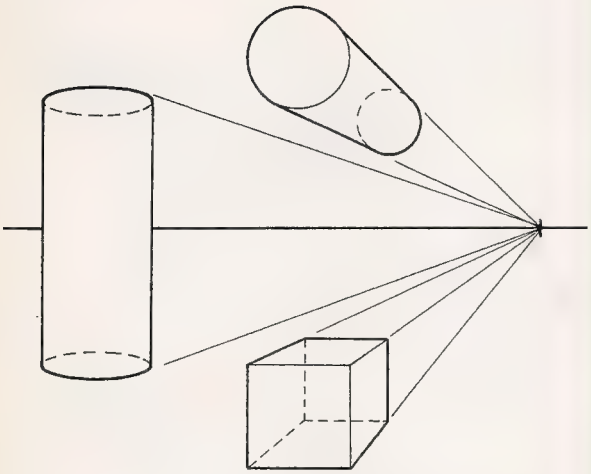
To draw a six-foot figure that's not touching the grid we made earlier (such as the figure on the far right of the diagram), you merely draw a vertical line (my line is dotted) which crosses the two diagonal converging lines that the original six-foot-tall figure's head and feet are touching. From the two points where the converging lines intersect your vertical line, draw horizontal lines across the picture plane. Any upright figure you draw which has the bottom of its feet on the lower horizontal line and the top of its head on the upper horizontal line is six feet tall in the correct perspective. If you look at the illustration, you can see exactly what I mean (I hope). This can be done anywhere on the grid.

If you have figures that are either floating or standing on something above the ground plane, you project converging lines from the head and feet of the original six-foot man until they reach the point on the ground where that new figure would be standing if he were on the ground. Project a vertical line upwards from that point on the ground, measure the distance between the top and bottom horizontal lines, and merely transfer that distance upwards to where the foot of the floating or standing figure is supposed to be (above the ground plane). It's really not that difficult.

If you're having trouble understanding this, throw a piece of tracing paper over the illustration, draw it out for yourself, and see if you can figure out exactly how the converging lines and the measurements stay the same for a six-foot figure wherever it may be.

So what if you need to do a different-sized figure? Well, if you need a three-foot figure, you merely cut the measurement in half. Everything is based on whatever you establish in the beginning with the first thing you draw.





SECTION 7: BASIC FORMS IN ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

Here we have a simple drawing of basic forms (two cylinders and a cube) in one-point perspective. Note how in one-point perspective, if we're looking at the end of a cylinder, the end is completely round and the cylinder recedes back along converging lines to the vanishing point. But if we're looking at the side of a cylinder, note that the sides don't converge anywhere as they stand vertically (or horizontally) and the round ends become ellipses. (There's a way to figure out exactly which ellipse to use, depending upon where it's based in perspective, but we'll go into that at a later time.)

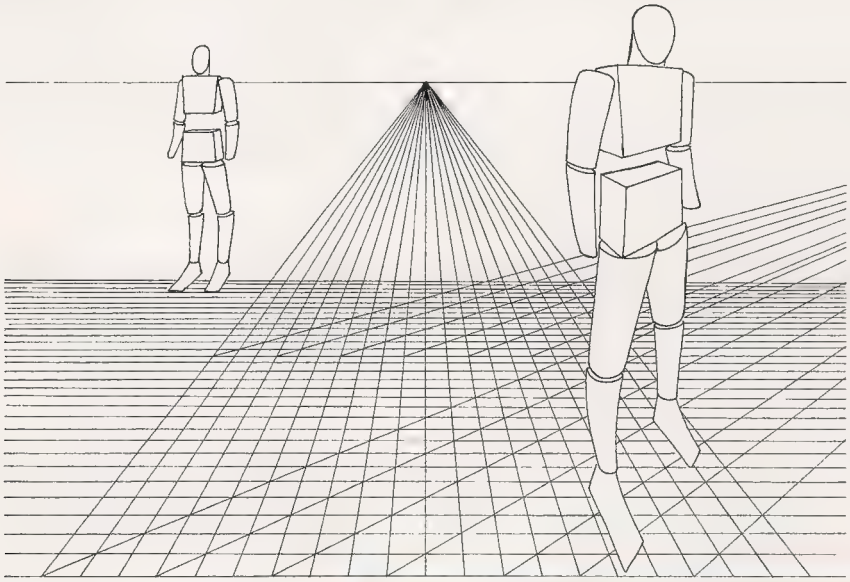
Look at and study these simple forms in perspective. Not only is perspective necessary for drawing scenes and backgrounds and buildings and the like, it's vitally important for drawing dynamic figures in motion in space. Perspective is probably the single most important tool an illustrator can have. It can take a bland drawing and make it exciting.

Study this perspective stuff. We'll be doing more and more of it, but if you're confused or disoriented by what you see here, take it apart, draw it for yourself, and figure out what's happening. Go out and find a book on it. Do whatever you have to, because it's vital and necessary if you want to be a good artist and draw powerful comics.

SECTION 8: PUT IT TO WORK

In the diagram, look at the figure to the far left. This is a simple, basic figure drawn in one-point perspective. You may have noticed that he's standing upright along a vertical axis. His shoulders and his hips are drawn horizontally—they're parallel to the horizontal axis. It's a perfectly competent, nice figure. Now look at the figure to the right, which is drawn in two-point perspective (don't choke—we'll talk about that next time).

Note how the second figure is a little more dynamic and a little more interesting, even a bit more interesting than real life. Both figures are drawn well, but see how much perspective has to do with the look and feel of each figure? Look at them, study them, and then practice your *one-point perspective*.



CONCLUSION:

Keep practicing that one-point perspective and get ready—next time we're going to look at two-point perspective! Thanks a lot for reading!

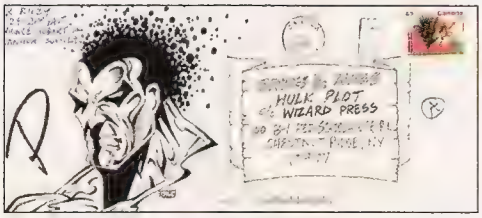
Dear Brute & Babe

SECTION 1:

Jared Ledger of Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada, writes in to ask if where he lives will affect his chances of getting a job in comics. Jared, don't worry about it. As you mentioned in your letter, Federal Express can do everything. Most freelancers who work in comics don't live in one of the major areas where comics are located, such as New York or the West Coast. They live all across the country and, in a lot of cases, around the world, and Federal Express (or some form of overnight service) is their bread and butter. All that's important is that you can draw well in a style that an editor or the fans will like. So don't worry about where you live—worry about what you're doing, and do the best that you possibly can. Good luck, Jared!

SECTION 2:

Ron Riley writes in from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada, with his presentation of a Hulk plot described way back in issue #20. Looks pretty good, Ron—keep it up; just watch your perspective. He also sent in his own rendition of Brute on the front of his envelope, which I've printed here. Looks good, Ron—thanks a lot!



Hulk Plot

Hulk © & ™ 1994 Marvel Entertainment Group

SECTION 3:

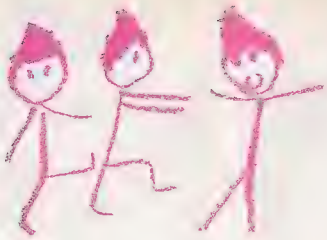
Xenon Yuan of Massachusetts has some questions about learning to draw, particularly if copying other artists to try to understand what they do is an acceptable way to learn or not. Yes, Xenon, by all means: a good way you can learn to draw is by looking at what others have drawn and studying it. Copying is one way to study. Throughout history, there have been a lot of painting and drawing classes that set the students up in front of the work of a great master and make them copy it till they produce an exact reproduction, so they can learn how and why what was done was done.

Copying (a word that's been blackballed in the industry) is fine as long as you learn from it. Don't just copy something and show it as your own work. Copy it, but as you're drawing what someone else has drawn before you, try to understand why they did what they did in the way that they did it. Think while you're doing it and learn from it; don't use copying as a crutch.

As far as showing your work to others, remember: make sure you show *your* work. Showing something you copied doesn't really demonstrate what you can do or how you draw. All my best, Xenon. *Ciao*!

Brute and Babe and their likenesses © 1994 Bart Sears. Artwork by Bart Sears and Sears Studio, 1994.

Little BRUTES & BABES



INTRODUCTION:

Last month we looked at basic shapes and how they can build basic bodies. This month, we're going to take those methods a little bit further and show you how to take a cartoon figure, add some details, and turn it into a more realistic superhero-type character.

SECTION 1:

This is the simple bubble-constructed figure that we made in the last issue.

SECTION 2:

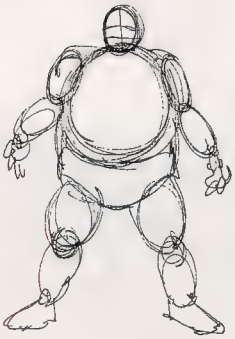
The newly sketched-in muscle bubble shapes and lines add more form and structure and believability to the figure.

SECTION 3:

Here we have a more firmly sketched-in, muscular figure. It's come a long way from the simple basic box shape that we started with in the last issue. Study it, see what was done, see how things grow and progress from the simple basic shape to a more finished superhero figure.

SECTION 4:

Note the cartoony little figure drawn in red. Now look at the more realistic sketched-in figure, which has the same pose and the same basic shapes but is drawn just a little more realistically, with more realistic proportions...

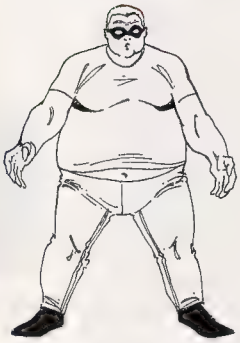


SECTION 5:

All right, here we have a finished superhero-type chubby guy. It's got the same expression, same stance, and same outfit as the original figure from last issue, but it's drawn more realistically.

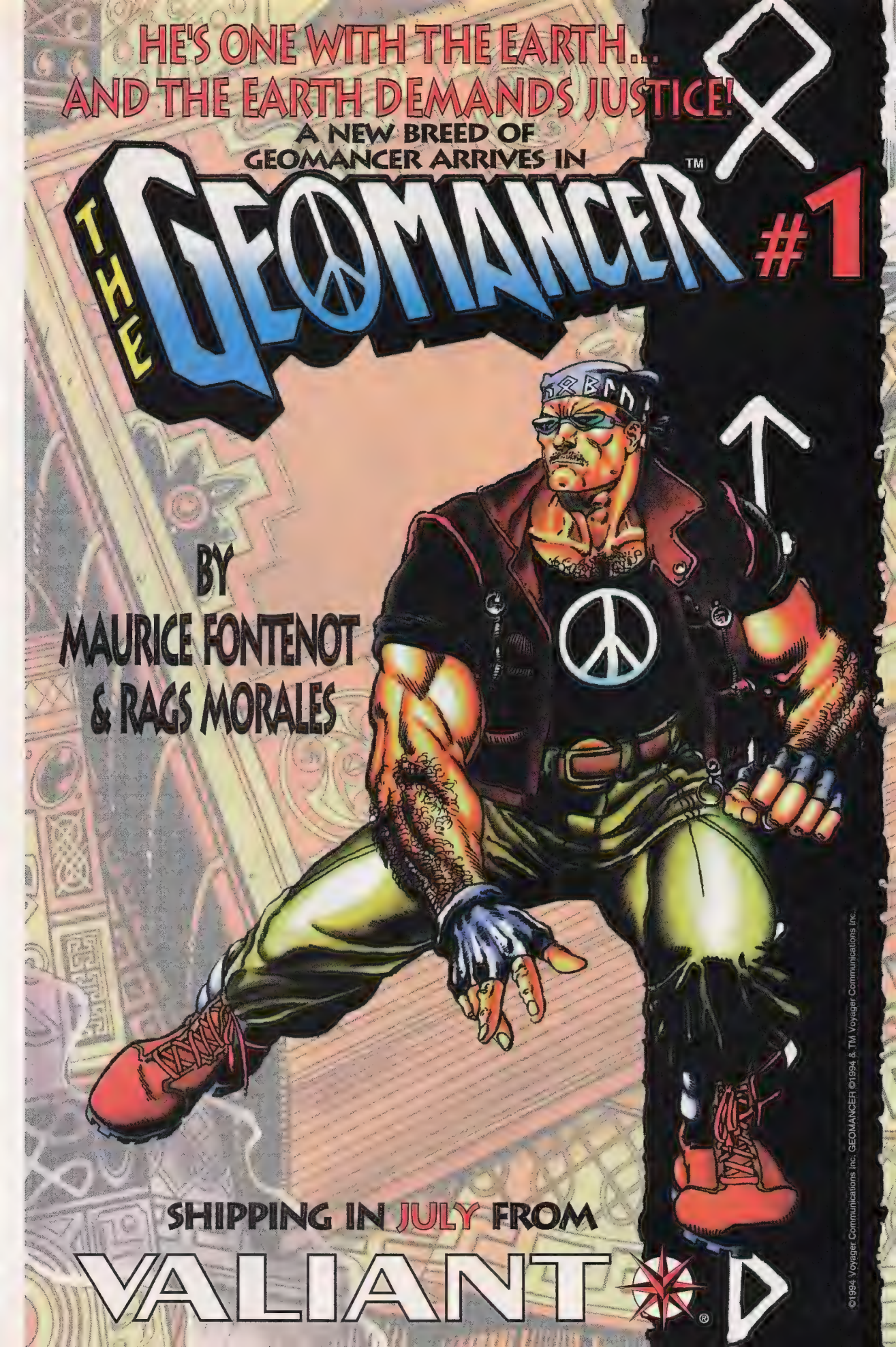
Remember, this is all cartooning. Cartooning is everything from a simple stick figure to a finished, fully rendered, realistic comic book illustration. See all the similarities?

Start thinking along these lines. Even if you aren't quite capable yet of drawing a finished, realistic figure, with a little practice you can draw a good-looking cartoon figure using a few simple basic shapes. Keep working, and stay with me. We'll go more and more in depth as time goes on.



CONCLUSION:

Keep working hard; I'm sure you're improving. Send in what you've done and let me see it—I'd love to take a look. We'll be doing more and more detail, explaining more and more about each of these individual steps as we get further along in Little Brutes & Babes. Until next month, please...*keep drawing!*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CUT & PRINT

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

BY DAVE GALVAN

IRON MAN, SPIDER-MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

I've got details on the first 12 episodes of the *Spider-Man* cartoon, which will air Saturday mornings on Fox. "The Sting of the Scorpion" features the origin of the Scorpion and a battle between him and Spidey. "The Night of the Lizard" introduces the tragic Lizard, whom Spider-Man tries to transform back into his human form. In "The Menace of Mysterio," Mysterio disguises himself as Spider-Man and fools the public into thinking that the web-slinger's become a criminal.

In "The Spider-Slayer" and "The Return of the Spider-Slayers," the Kingpin hires father and son, respectively, to find and destroy Spider-Man with their deadly Spider-Slayer robots. In the three-part "Venom," Spidey faces his greatest enemy. The wall crawler becomes the prey of the world's greatest hunter in "Kraven the Hunter." When "Doctor Octopus" rents a room in Aunt May's house, Peter Parker must protect her. "The Green Goblin" unmasks Spider-Man and features a climactic battle atop the Brooklyn Bridge. "The Hobgoblin" picks up where "The Green Goblin" leaves off when someone finds the villain's lair and begins his own reign of crime.

I've also obtained information on the upcoming *Iron Man* and *Fantastic Four* cartoons, which are set to air during the Saturday morning "Marvel Action Hour" on Fox.

More Marvel heroes arrive on the small screen!

SPIDEY, SHELLHEAD, & F.F. CARTOONS

In *Iron Man*, ol' Shellhead is teamed with the current roster of Force Works: War Machine, Spider-Woman, Century, Hawkeye, and the Scarlet Witch. Here's an episode guide: "And the Sea Shall Give Up Its Dead" pits the team against the Mandarin, Dreadknight, Whirlwind, Blizzard, and the Grey Gargoyle; the Mandarin frames Tony Stark, effectively destroying Stark Enterprises, in "Data In—Chaos Out"; in "Rejoice! I am Ultimo, Thy Deliverer," the Mandarin and Modok resurrect a giant alien robot; and the Mandarin's goons (Dreadknight, Whirlwind, and crew) steal a Stark Enterprises super-jet fighter for their own purposes in "The Grim Reaper Wears a Teflon Coat."

The Fantastic Four episodes include the two-part "Origin of the Fantastic Four," which reveals their origin and brings them face to face with the Puppet Master; "Now Comes the Sub-Mariner," wherein Namor kidnaps Sue Storm and brings her to Atlantis, prompting a jealous Lady Dorma to order an attack on Earth; and "Incursion of the Skrull," in

Character designs for *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*. (Shame they used *that* Iron Man armor though. Ugh!)

which the FF battle the Skrulls.

Incredibly keen readers out there will have noticed that five new episodes of Warner Bros.'s *Batman: The Animated Series* aired in early May. However, there are 15 more episodes that haven't yet aired, some of which will be saved for the beginning of the coming fall season.

The show will be pretty different this fall: Fox has decided to free up a weekday time slot and air *Batman* on a weekly schedule on Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Fox is also changing the name of the show to *The Adventures of Batman and Robin*, even though Robin only appears in about one-third of the episodes.

Ten of the remaining 15 unseen episodes will air at the beginning of the season; the other five will stay in limbo until it's decided whether or not to renew the show for another season. If that happens, the five remaining episodes will air toward the end of the 1994-95 season. If not, they'll be saved for the fall 1995 "sweeps" period. Observers speculate that Fox might cancel the show because of recent discussions in Congress about violence on TV. Other insiders hint that Warner Bros. is ready to syndicate the show and would just as soon not spend money to produce more new episodes.

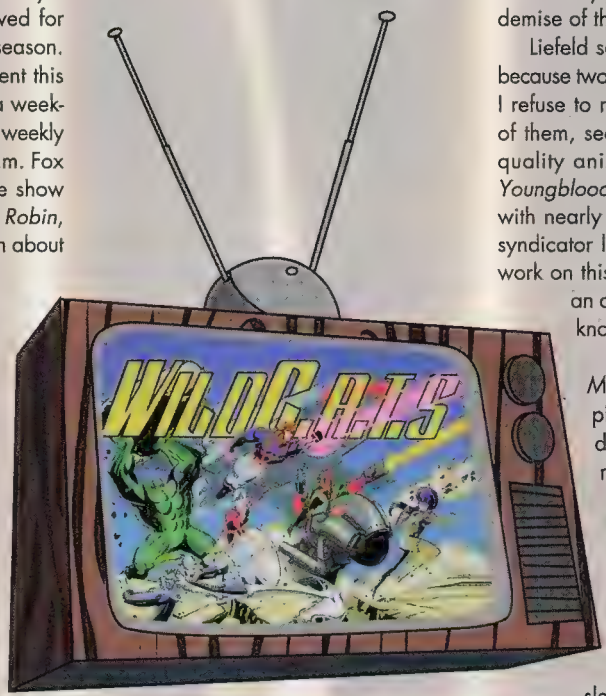
In other animation news, *WildC.A.T.s* has been picked up by CBS for its Saturday morning lineup. The first episode will air September 17. The show will compete with Fox's *X-Men* in the 10 a.m. time slot. Nelvana will produce the series. CBS hasn't yet announced a decision on Erik Larsen's proposed *Savage Dragon* cartoon series.

The road to television has been a rocky one for Image titles. Originally, CBS optioned cartoons starring characters from *Youngblood*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *Savage Dragon*, and *Freak Force*. CBS eventually passed on *Freak Force* and was considering airing the other three in a 90-minute continuous cartoon block.

In February, Rob Liefeld pulled out of negotiations with CBS, irritating network executives. Later that week, Extreme Studios parted ways with would-be *Youngblood* animation company Roustabout. Roustabout co-founder Lance Falk says that things turned sour as soon as lawyers and agents were brought in to scrutinize the budget proposal. Falk says that executives at Extreme thought that cheaper help would make the project more profitable. Roustabout's members, however, didn't feel it would be worth their while to work on *Youngblood* at the rates Extreme was offering. Falk blames the clan of executives, lawyers, and agents that was brought in, not Liefeld—who he was "very impressed with"—for the demise of the project.

Liefeld says that "the deal went sour because two members of Roustabout, who I refuse to name, let greed get the best of them, seeing dollar signs instead of quality animation. The interest in the *Youngblood* series is at an all-time high, with nearly every animation studio and syndicator lining up to get a chance to work on this property. We'll be making an announcement soon to let you know who it's going to be."

On a happier note, *The Mask* animated series has been picked up by CBS as a Saturday morning mid-season replacement.



Though other Image titles were optioned for possible cartoon deals, only *WildC.A.T.s* made the grade.

FILM

Darkman Redux

Sam Raimi and Robert Tapert, the men behind *Evil Dead* and *Darkman*, have a pair of projects up their sleeves: they're producing two made-for-video sequels to the popular superhero-themed *Darkman*! The first film is in postproduction and will be released in November. Arnold Vosloo takes over the character of Darkman, originally por-

WildC.A.T.s ™ & © Wildstorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment

"Uh, Batman, now that the series's name has changed, shouldn't you be helping me in some way?"

trayed by Liam Neeson. The story is about one of the doctors who separated the nerve in Darkman's brain; he tells Darkman he can repair some of the damage, but eventually turns the troubled hero into a lab rat. Darkman must also give the only piece of skin he has left to save a girl's face (ouch!).

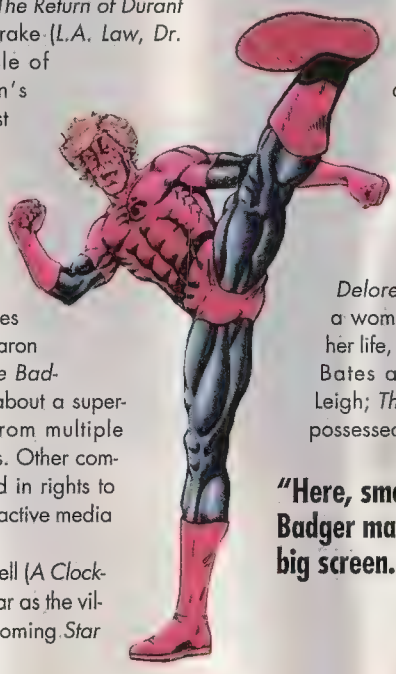
The second *Darkman* sequel is filming now. It's called *The Return of Durant* and returns Larry Drake (*L.A. Law, Dr. Giggles*) in the role of Durant, Darkman's nemesis from the first feature film. The script is by comic book scribe Mark Verheiden, who also scripted the film *The Mask*.

Paramount Pictures has optioned Mike Baron and Jeff Butler's *The Badger*, a comic book about a superhero who suffers from multiple personality disorders. Other companies are interested in rights to the property for interactive media like CD-ROM.

Malcolm McDowell (*A Clockwork Orange*) will star as the villain Soren in the upcoming *Star Trek: Generations*. McDowell will battle with both Captain Jean-Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) and Captain James T. Kirk (William Shatner).

According to published reports, actress Emily Lloyd (*In Country*) has signed on as the lead character in United Artists's *Tank Girl*, based on Jamie Hewlett's cult comic book series. Shooting commences in June.

Stephen King proved once again that his properties are bankable when *The Stand* aired on ABC earlier this month. Other movies being developed from King's work include *Delores Claiborne*, about a woman looking back on her life, which will star Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason Leigh; *The Mangler*, about a possessed machine in a Laundromat, which will star Ted Levine and Robert Englund of Freddy Krueger fame; and *Thinner*, about a man who can't stop losing weight, which is being scripted by Michael McDowell, with Tom Holland set to direct.



"Here, smell this!" The Badger may make it to the big screen.

Two upcoming movies will be based on books by Michael Crichton, author of *Jurassic Park*. *Disclosure* deals with sexual harassment in the workplace; it will star Michael Douglas and Demi Moore and will be directed by Barry Levinson. Up next for Crichton is *Congo*, a thriller about an expedition to discover a lost African city; Kathleen Kennedy is producing and Frank Marshall is directing.

Harlan Ellison sold the film rights to his recent novella *Mefisto in Onyx* to MGM for a six-figure sum. The story is about Allison Roche, a deputy district attorney who recently convicted a man named Henry Lake on 56 counts of murder. Trouble is, she's having second thoughts about his guilt—during the trial, in fact, she fell in love with Lake! She asks her friend Rudy Paris to go to the jail to find out whether he's guilty or not. Why Paris? Because he's telepathic.

Dr. Who fans unite! Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment is speaking with the BBC about a big-screen version of everyone's favorite time traveler.

THE BADGER ™ & © CLASSICS INTERNATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. BATMAN, ROBIN AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS ™ & DC COMICS.

The Tick ™ & © Ben Edlund

"I may be obscure, but I've got a cartoon now, dammit!!" The Tick on the Fox Kids Network.

TV

King Redux

Stephen King has several TV movie projects in the works. *The Talisman*, based on King and Peter Straub's book about a cross-country chase between a teenage boy and a supernatural force, is being considered by Amblin Entertainment for a 1996 ABC TV movie; an anthology, *Creepshow 3*, is being prepped for TV; *Night Flier*, about a journalist who encounters a vampire, will be an animated TV special; and *The Langoliers*, wherein a plane travels to another dimension to witness the destruction of reality, is set to be produced by Laurel Entertainment (the same people who brought you *The Stand*).

The Tick debuts this fall on the Fox Kids Network. Fox's newest comic book cartoon, based on the Ben Edlund creation, will air at 10:30 every Saturday morning. The Tick is a giant 400-pound crime fighter who views the world through innocent eyes. He has a trusty sidekick named Arthur (voiced by Mickey Dolenz from *The Monkees*), a diminutive ex-accountant who wears a moth suit complete with wings. Another character who will turn up on occasion is American Maid, a heroine with killer stiletto heels to accompany her French-maid suit.

The Tick's rogues gallery includes Chairface Chippendale, a brilliant but diabolical creature who has never gotten over the fact that he was teased as a child for the shape of his head (it looks like a chair); El Seed, who has petals for hands and feet; and the Breadmaster, an angry chef who plots to blow up the city with a giant soufflé. Obviously, *The Tick* is a comedic spoof of superhero genres, something that the comic book has always done very well. *The Tick* is produced by Sunbow Productions and Graz Entertainment.

The live-action *Mantis* has been picked up for 13 episodes that will tentatively start airing on August 21, 1994. The original pilot for *Mantis* aired this past January on Fox. It introduced us to Miles Hawkins, a brilliant scientist who gets shot by a man dressed as a cop during riots in the fictional Ocean City. Hawkins, paralyzed by the bullet, develops a suit that enables him to walk—and fight crime. The character is a cross between Batman and Iron Man, with a little bit of Green Hornet and a dash of Watchmen thrown in for good measure.

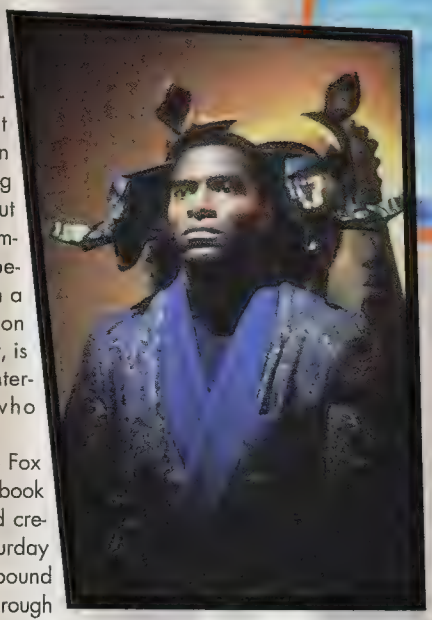
The series has been put in the hands of Bryce Zabel, who will take what he liked from the first pilot and shape it into a new show. In other words, forget you ever saw the first pilot.

Shooting for *Mantis* is scheduled to start the first week of June. A location hasn't been chosen as of this writing, but producers are leaning toward either the Canadian cities of Vancouver or Toronto, with Los Angeles placing third and my hometown of Portland, Ore., coming in a distant fourth. Fox picked up the show after the original pilot did very well with males aged 18 to 45. *Mantis*'s 13 episodes will air after Sunday night NFL games to attract that same demographic group.

On the lighter side of show biz, two police officers in Milwaukie, Ore., recently did something that even Arnold Schwarzenegger couldn't do: capture the Predator. On March 17, two men allegedly broke a pane-glass window at the headquarters of Dark Horse Comics, picked up a life-size model of the Predator valued at over $5,000, stuffed it in the back of their 1976 Chrysler Cordoba, and took off! A carpet layer who was working at Dark Horse was 50 feet away and saw the whole thing happen. Other people walking down Main Street also witnessed the crime. So did firemen at a fire station located right across the street.

The firemen called 911, and a police car spotted the thieves a few minutes later. The police car was equipped with a camera, normally used to record drunk drivers. The tape clearly shows the Predator, which even rolls around and stares at the camera. The two were captured and the Predator was returned to Dark Horse Comics later in the day. ☆

The Mantis 1994 © Universal Pictures

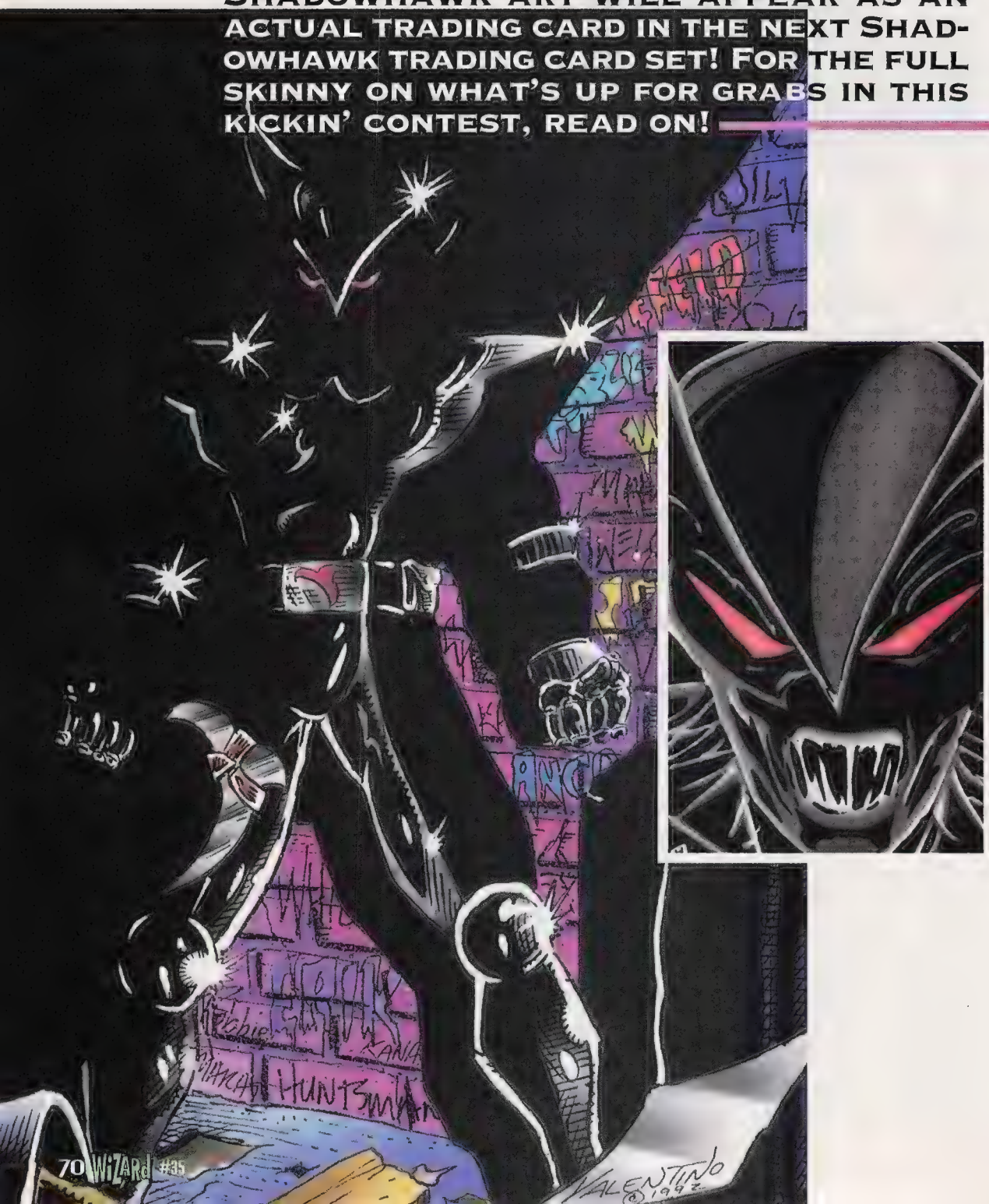


Check out *Mantis* (and that stupid mask of his) on Fox this August.

CONTEST

Shadowhawk

SHADOWLINE INK AND WIZARD PRESS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE COPIOUS TALENTS OF *WIZARD*'S READERS. THAT'S WHY WE'VE TEAMED UP TO PRODUCE THIS AWESOME CONTEST IN WHICH ONE LUCKY WINNER'S SHADOWHAWK ART WILL APPEAR AS AN ACTUAL TRADING CARD IN THE NEXT SHADOWHAWK TRADING CARD SET! FOR THE FULL SKINNY ON WHAT'S UP FOR GRABS IN THIS KICKIN' CONTEST, READ ON!



Grand Prize (One winner)

The grand prize winner will have his or her art appear as an actual trading card in the next Shadowhawk trading card set as well as in an upcoming issue of *Shadowhawk* and an upcoming issue of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*! On top of that, the grand prize winner will also receive a complete set of all the *Shadowhawk* series through *Shadowhawk III* #4, including a superrare Gold *Shadowhawk III* #1 (limited to 4,000 copies), with each and every issue signed by Shadowhawk creator Jim Valentino!

Second Prize (Two winners)

A complete set of all the *Shadowhawk* series through *Shadowhawk III* #4, including a Gold *Shadowhawk III* #1, all signed by Jim Valentino! And hey, we'll throw in a *Shadowhawk II* trade paperback signed by that Valentino fella as well as an Animated Alligator compact disc or cassette (your choice), which features a dramatic reading, set to music, of the entire *Shadowhawk II* trade paperback!

Third Prize (15 winners)

If you can't do any better than third place, you win a Gold *Shadowhawk III* #1 signed by Jim Valentino!

As you can see, there's lots of pretty neat stuff up for grabs. But to be eligible to win, you gotta show us your stuff and submit an original Shadowhawk drawing. No copying from any Shadowhawk comics or anything—your entry has got to be 100 percent original and 100 percent you. And...

Submissions may be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard. **Submissions must be in black and white. No colored entries will be accepted. (In fact, we'll deep-six 'em as soon as we see they're in color.)** Artwork must not be larger than eight by 11-and-a-quarter inches. Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork; mail flat to avoid damage. Attach an Official Shadowhawk Art Contest Entry Form, index card, or standard postcard with your printed name, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code to the back of the artwork. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Shadowline Ink. Employees of Wizard Press and Shadowline Ink are the sole judges of the contest, and all decisions are final.

Hey, put that pencil down—you ain't finished readin' yet! When you've completed your Shadowhawk art, send it off to:

Shadowhawk Art Contest
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Better sharpen your pencils—this contest is kaput after June 20, 1994!

The Fine Print

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Shadowline Ink, their immediate families, and that jerk Hawk's Shadow. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a three-by-five-inch index card, or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Shadowhawk Art Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Shadowline Ink and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. In the event that the Shadowhawk trading card set is not produced, the grand prize winner's art entry will see print in an issue of *Shadowhawk* and *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 20, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. All decisions are final. The prize winners will be selected from all properly completed art entries received at contest headquarters. The winners will be chosen on June 21, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after July 15, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Shadowhawk Art Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

Shadowhawk ™ & © Jim Valentino.

ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 20, 1994!

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Shadowhawk
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NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) _____ AGE _____

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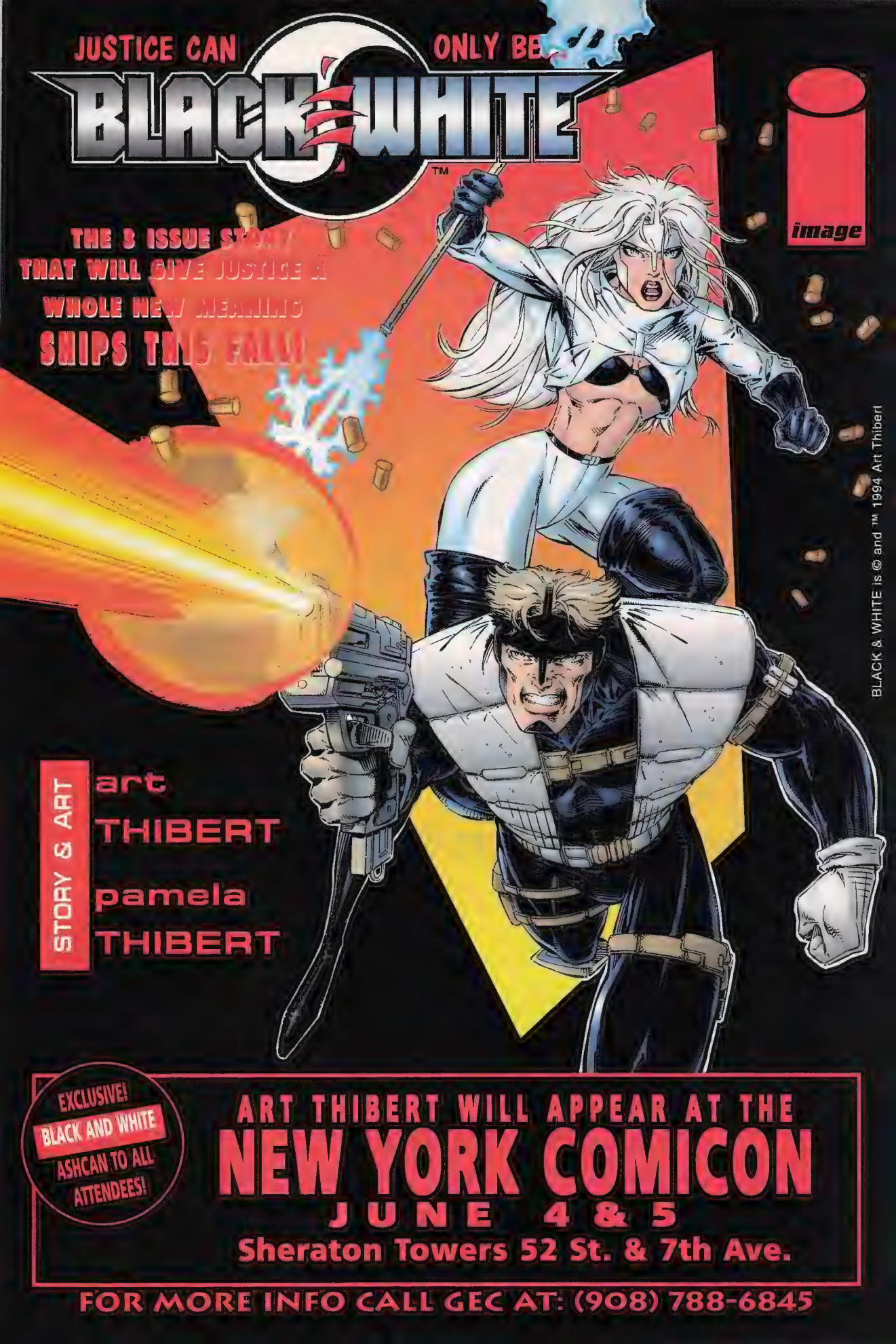
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"BREED", "DREADSTAR"

Jean Paul's days of rousting punks as Batman may be numbered.

DARK Knights

By Craig Shutt

THE BATMAN CREATORS DISCUSS THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL BATMAN, WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN A BAD MARKETING MOVE, AND WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN THE PUNISHER COMES TO TOWN.

Batman group editor Dennis O'Neil has a secret he's dying to share: not only is the Batman team examining serious themes in "KnightsEnd," but that's been the plan from the start. As those themes become more apparent and the finale of the 60-part Batman epic careens into view, the team takes some time to consider what went right, what went wrong, and what it all means for the evolving cast of characters.

The entire epic began in May 1993 with "Knightfall," the DC Comics crossover in which Bane broke the back of the Batman and unleashed anarchy upon the city of Gotham. In "Knightquest," Jean Paul Valley, whom Bruce Wayne chose as his successor, strove to set things right while Wayne took the first steps on the road to recovery. His recuperation, while encouraging, has been mirrored by Valley's deterioration. "KnightsEnd" promises to resolve the fate of Gotham's most influential residents.

The two themes that wind through "KnightsEnd" focus on the concept of heroism in the 1990s and how much responsibility a creator—in this case, Wayne—must take for his creation. Along the way, O'Neil says, the Batman creative team has also been trying to avoid the mistakes it sees being made in so many other crossovers.

"Our primary goal was to entertain," O'Neil stresses. "That's why people buy comics. Even in the stories I've written that have messages, that's the primary duty. If you blow that, you blow the gig."

The "KnightsEnd" themes are particularly apropos today, the editor adds, because the idea of what constitutes a hero has changed dramatically. "Clearly, the concept is not what it was in 1939," when the original Batman premiered. "Hence the creation of Jean Paul Valley. He mirrors the guys who are called heroes in other comics and media."

THE DARKER KNIGHT

This may come as a shock to some of the fan press, O'Neil says dryly, "but Jean Paul is not working out as Batman. I've been reading in kind of a spirit of bemusement some of the press that's been out and it just astonishes me. They say, 'Hey, this isn't a very good guy, he's all screwed up.'

"I've been doing this for 30 years now, and I'm working with excellent storytellers. Of course he's screwed up. Do they think we're not aware that he's too violent? That's part of the story. I forgive readers for being upset with us over Jean Paul, but it's a lot harder to understand how professional critics can make the same mistake."

Legends of the Dark Knight co-editor Archie Goodwin concurs. "Sometimes we're a little surprised that people act as if we don't know what we're doing. It's also a little surprising how real the characters become for the readers. We want them to suspend their disbelief while they read the story, so in a way it's great that they care so much."

In fact, O'Neil admits, "One of the things we feared at the beginning was that people would love Jean Paul. We thought that was a real possibility. He doesn't take any guff, and that's popular today. He's like a lot of [other companies'] characters that don't reflect my idea of what a hero should be because there's a wanton taking of life. I'm not a big fan of violence for its own sake."

Neither is *Batman* writer Doug Moench, who is pleasantly surprised by the heated fan reaction. "I can be awfully cynical about the readership," he laughs. "I'm glad to see they're not the kill-crazy maniacs we thought they might be."

Adds *Detective Comics* and *Robin* writer Chuck Dixon, "We wanted Jean Paul to be despised, and I'm afraid we did our job all too well. The readers hate him, and we're not too fond of him either. I think he's a punk, I think he's a creep, and I think Bruce Wayne could clean his clock with one hand tied behind his back—just not at the moment."

But Valley isn't irredeemable, O'Neil argues. "I'm not unsympathetic to him. He has reasons for the way he acts, which reinforces the fact that we like to believe there are reasons for the extreme violence, such as

Batman and all artwork and characters shown ™ & © DC Comics unless otherwise noted.

terrorism, that we read about. I think he's more to be pitied than censured. But he's also not to be admired."

"KnightsEnd" explores the changing notion of heroism. "What are the values that a hero should represent?" O'Neil asks. "Heroes only are interesting insofar as they have interesting problems to solve and bring the story to a satisfying close. It's an easy out to give them a gun and let them kill. It's a cop-out."

The other theme being studied in "KnightsEnd" is the need to take responsibility for one's creations. "That's Bruce's problem," O'Neil points out. "He has to ask, 'How responsible am I for what this thing does? I made [Valley the new Batman] in good conscience, but it's not working out the way I had hoped.' Bruce gave this tortured kid a venue, an arena, in which to act out. Now what does he do?"

ANATOMY OF A CROSSOVER

In "KnightsEnd," the team is also presenting its notion of what a complicated storyline should include. "In a way, we're unconsciously reacting to a lot of the other big crossovers, where you see one dramatic high point told over and over again," Dixon says. "In 'KnightsEnd,' there are at least a half-dozen really good dramatic high points that involve lots of characters."

To achieve this, most of the main points were worked out well in advance. But that still left room for the story to evolve, O'Neil says. "With writers as good as ours, they get ideas after the plot conferences that sometimes are better. In broad general terms, we knew where we were going every step of the way, and yet we didn't want to shut the door on good ideas."

The rest of those good ideas will be played out over the next few months after "KnightsEnd" is kicked off in May's *Batman* #509. The 10-part crossover will also run through *Detective Comics*, *Robin*, *Catwoman*, *Legends of the Dark Knight*, *Shadow of the Bat*, and *Showcase '94*.

Jean Paul seems to be getting a little carried away when he dons the Batduds; Bruce Wayne will have to cut him down to size.

In June's *Batman* #510, by Moench and artist Mike Manley, Bruce battles Jean Paul. "Jean Paul doesn't want to give up being Batman," Moench explains. "He thinks he's the guy, so Bruce has to take it back if he's going to reclaim the title." It's not clear, however, if either man will be able to take up the mantle after their duel. Is yet another Caped Crusader waiting in the wings? Nobody's talking, although rumors are spreading that Dick Grayson, the first Robin, will don the cape and cowl he was groomed to wear but has since forsaken.

The answers will be revealed in *Detective* #677 by writer Dixon, penciler Graham Nolan, and inker Scott Hanna. Those answers will cause some cast members to leave the book, while others, including Dick Grayson and Barbara (Oracle) Gordon, the former Batgirl, will return.

Legends of the Dark Knight #63 will detail Bruce's preparation for the ultimate confrontation, Goodwin says. That issue, the final chapter of "KnightsEnd," will also present the final clash between "the current Batman and the once and perhaps future Batman. That's all I'm going to say."

He does add that Alfred, who has begun to have difficulty keeping up with Bruce Wayne's travails, is pushed to the brink by the latest events. "Alfred will play a significant role following 'KnightsEnd' with the new Batman," Goodwin says. "I don't know if this means the return of the Outsider," a villainous version of Alfred which appeared back in the 1960s. "But I suspect not." Whew.

Detective Comics editor Scott Peterson explains Alfred's fate. "Alfred has quit Bruce Wayne's service in *Legends of the Dark Knight*

"WE WANTED JEAN PAUL VALLEY TO BE DESPISED, AND I'M AFRAID WE DID OUR JOB ALL TOO WELL. THE READERS HATE HIM, AND WE'RE NOT TOO FOND OF HIM EITHER. I THINK HE'S A PUNK, I THINK HE'S A CREEP, AND I THINK BRUCE WAYNE COULD CLEAN HIS CLOCK WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND HIS BACK—JUST NOT AT THE MOMENT."

—CHUCK DIXON

#60," he says. "He decides he cannot go along with Bruce's mad quest. If Bruce is going to kill himself, he's not going to be around to help. And that's the last we're going to see of Alfred for quite a while."

Shadow of the Bat follows Valley's battle with his inner demons: the hallucinations brought about by the mind-altering System, which was imposed upon him by the Order of St. Dumas. In *Shadow* #29, after discovering Valley's elaborate costume changes and his vicious ways of dealing with crime, Commissioner James Gordon confronts the new Batman. As a result, Valley throws off any pretense of being his predecessor and embarks upon a rampage that makes the streets of Gotham safer—but at a price.

ALLIES AND ACCESSORIES

The ramifications of "KnightsEnd" will be explored in *Catwoman* and *Robin*.

The dramatic events of *Robin* #7, in which Robin told Bruce Wayne what his successor has wrought, will reverberate through the next two issues, Dixon says. Wayne confronts Lady Shiva, an old nemesis, to prove that he's worthy of regaining the cape and cowl. He allows her to retrain him in order to get back into crime-fighting shape. "Everything starts to come together at that point," says Dixon.

Issues #8 and #9 will delve into how Robin will relate to the new Dark Knight. "Tim is concerned with how Bruce Wayne will be different after this event," Dixon says. "He wants to know if their relationship will change." Even though these issues are explored from Tim Drake's point of view, Dixon emphasizes that they're crucial to the main story. "Every part of 'KnightsEnd' is very important to the overall tale... There are no sideshows this time around."

In May, one of the Batmen, Nightwing, and Robin will guest star in *Catwoman* #12. But Selina Kyle's plate seems to be full even after "KnightsEnd" wraps up: tentative plans call for the title's creative team to reveal Catwoman's "definitive" origin, which would lead to her being fully integrated into the DC Universe. Several provisional crossovers are also being planned, including one in which she would meet up with the Joker.

As if all that weren't enough to keep Batfans sated, "KnightsEnd" ties into DC and Marvel's Batman/Punisher crossover. DC's half, *Lake of Fire*, due out in June, will be told by editor Goodwin, writer O'Neil, penciler Barry Kitson, and inker James Pascoe.

While some may see hidden depths in the Punisher, Azrael/Batman finds him pretty simple to understand, O'Neil explains. "He thinks the Punisher is a criminal, and all criminals are bad," he says. "But we do manage to avoid the cliché where the costumed heroes beat the bejeezus out of each other and then discover their mistake."

The storylines in both issues revolve around Jigsaw, a longtime Punisher foe, who comes to Gotham intent upon taking control of the mob scene. Because of O'Neil's tight schedule, he's scripting this book Marvel-style, writing a plot and finalizing the dialogue only after the pages have been drawn. "It's not the way I would have preferred to work," says the man who did work that way during a long stint at Marvel on books like *Daredevil* and *Iron Man*. "But when you're an old, old, old writer like me, it helps to change your act every so often."

The best part, he adds, is that Kitson is working closely with him on the layouts. "The problem with some artists who work Marvel-style is that they say they're going to improve your plot, but they actually just want to draw neat pictures. Barry has a great respect for the story. And for a 48-page book, this story is pretty dense."

Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire also offers a preview of the creative team that will be working on this fall's ongoing *Azrael* title. "It's a high-profile project, so I hope it helps launch us as a team," O'Neil says. (For more on the new *Azrael* series, see the sidebar.)

Chuck Dixon, who writes *Punisher* and *Punisher War Zone* for Marvel, is teaming with artist John Romita Jr. and inker Klaus Janson for Marvel's Punisher/Batman effort, scheduled for August. "I've been campaigning to do this team-up for two years," says Dixon, who's had a story in mind all that time. "I'm glad it finally came together." A few of his plot points were shot down in story conferences, "but basically it's the story I wanted to tell. Besides, J.R. Jr. is going to make me look like a genius."

Punisher and Jigsaw return in *Punisher/Batman*, but not the Jean Paul Valley Batman. "The Batman change causes some

John Romita Jr.'s grungy Punisher will face off against the Dark Knight.

THE PUNISHER ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

problems for Frank Castle [the Punisher] in the Marvel book," Dixon says. "He thinks, 'Hey, I've met this guy,' and [believes that] everything's cool—until Batman decks him." And that's not his only problem: the Joker lurks in the shadows...

Needless to say, there are still a few twists and turns ahead for Batman—whoever he may be. "I'll be surprised if a large number of readers guess the conclusion to 'KnightsEnd,'" says O'Neil. "We've worked hard to ensure we don't do what people think they know we're going to do. And we still have two or three twists left."

It all comes together in the grand finale, "KnightsEnd: Aftermath," slated for *Robin* and *Catwoman*. "I resisted calling these issues epilogues, because they're not," O'Neil says. "When 'KnightsEnd' ends, it ends."

When it does end, the entire "Knightfall," "Knightquest," and "KnightsEnd" saga will be made available in a hardcover book and on audio tapes. The novelization, to be published by Bantam Books, has been written by O'Neil and fleshes out parts of the story. Time-Warner Audio will release audio cassettes of 65 three-minute radio shows created for BBC Radio by writer/director Dirk Maggs. Both items will be unveiled at the July 1-3 Chicago Comicon.

O'Neil says that the Batman editors have been intimately involved in the radio production, including script changes and having casting input. "It's been fascinating to tell the same story in three fairly radically different media," O'Neil says, speaking about the comic, novel, and radio products. "It offers the readers a triple whammy."

PAST IMPERFECT

O'Neil gives credit to his entire team, including *Detective* editor Peterson and *Batman* assistant editor Jordan B. Gorfinkel, for ensuring that no glitches disrupted "KnightsEnd." "Glaring plot contradictions are my biggest fear, because we're so familiar with it and we're coordinating six writers over eight stories."

"This one's much harder to track than 'Knightfall,'" Dixon agrees. "It always threatened to get away from us.... It's been a nightmare for the editors, because they had to establish the important points and be sure each was covered."

Due to some scheduling conflicts, a few chapters were written out of order, complicating the process even further. "[*Detective* inker] Scott Hanna spotted a major continuity glitch at one point, and we'll be thankful to him to our graves," Dixon says. "That's the cool part about the Batman books. Everyone's involved and helping out."

The team hopes that their combined efforts have created a mosaic, O'Neil explains. "We want to make each piece interesting, but when it's finished, you should be able to step back and see this great big complicated narrative that makes a big picture. It's been a very difficult year for a lot of reasons."

In fact, O'Neil now admits, "I think maybe we should have ended the story three months earlier. That may have been a miscalculation." They decided to extend the story so it would segue smoothly into *Zero Hour*. "It would have been awkward to end our story and mark time for three months." But this doesn't mean that they just padded out the existing tale, O'Neil asserts. Several plotlines, including Bruce Wayne's search for Shondra Kinsolving, his physician and apparent love interest, and Nightwing's role, were added. "Nightwing's scenes in particular should please the hardcore fan."

Even so, O'Neil concedes, sales figures indicate that the Batman crossovers should have ended sooner. "I wish sales were a little higher, but that's always true," he says. "Sales are good—everyone but me is getting rich off this. I wish the editors that I write for would come up with ideas like this."

Moench was also surprised by the sales trends. "I thought 'Knightfall' would lead up to the big sales with the new Batman," he says. "Instead, 'Knightfall' got huge, huge sales and turned out to be the peak. So in that way, it's backwards." But it's all relative,

THE KNIGHT BEFORE

After "KnightsEnd," Azrael will continue to fight crime in his own distinctive way. He'll have his own self-titled ongoing series, set to debut in October from writer Dennis O'Neil, penciler Barry Kitson, and inker James Pascoe.

O'Neil's first job will be to "rehabilitate" Jean Paul Valley somehow. "I don't particularly like him at this point. He represents what is wrong with the world. Fortunately, we have a tool today unavailable to previous generations of comics creators: we are allowed to let our hero change. I'm fairly sure that he will continue to evolve for at least a year."

O'Neil relates* Azrael *to his earlier critically acclaimed work for DC's* The Question, *which portrayed a dark and brooding crime fighter not unlike Azrael. "The subtext of those 36 issues was the Question's search for identity, which ultimately he didn't find.... As with those issues, I'd like to try to do something different [and] interesting."

He says Kitson feels the same way. "We'd like it to sell, but we want to make it interesting for ourselves first," O'Neil says. "My guess is it will appeal to the top 10 percent of our readers in [terms of] education and literacy. But it won't be a Vertigo book, either. It definitely will be grounded in the pulp tradition."

Plans are not yet finalized, however, and O'Neil is pondering over a host of ideas. "I wouldn't mind researching the avenging angel concept and playing with that," he says. He may also delve into the intricacies of the supersecret Order of St. Dumas, which, he admits, was developed only far enough to help solve a few plot points. "My guess is by now, they've replaced Jean Paul as Azrael."

Editor Archie Goodwin points out that Azraels have existed through history, meaning that different stories could feature different versions. "We certainly see the opportunity for looking at other time periods," he says. "It's a neat part of the mythology. It's rife with possibilities, more so than other characters might be."

O'Neil agrees. "I think I'll buy* Paradise Lost *this summer and reread it on a plane flight," he says, referring to the epic John Milton poem about Satan's war against God. "Rebellion is always a good theme."

—Craig Shutt

What will happen to Jean Paul? Will he be replaced as Azrael?

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TUROK DINOSAUR HUNTER #16	NINJAK #8	X-O MANOWAR #33	RAI #26
SECRETS OF THE VALIANT UNIVERSE #2	archer & ARMSTRONG / ETERNAL WARRIOR #26	H.A.R.D. CORPS #23	MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #41

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Is Bruce Wayne up to the task of being Batman again?

he points out: sales on "KnightsEnd" have remained well above those for any of the books prior to the big event.

O'Neil agrees. "We're neck and neck with [the Superman titles], and in the larger picture, that puts us in the top 10 best-selling characters. The best part is that we're talking about Superman and Batman, the two oldest characters in comics."

He bristles at any suggestion that Batman's downfall was inspired by Superman's earlier high-profile death. "Anyone who says that is showing their ignorance of lead times in publishing comics," he states. "I swear, I came up with my idea three years ago in London and had no contact with [Superman editor] Mike Carlin."

But had he known about Doomsday, he adds, he would have postponed "Knightfall" for a year. "Neither of us knew the other one had this big, elaborate caper in mind," he says. "When we found out, we gritted our teeth and hoped for the best." He doesn't think that the Superman event hurt Batman's sales, even though it preceded his own saga by a few months. "I thought it would take the wind out of my sails, but that doesn't seem to be happening.

"The negative reaction to Batman has been more vehement, but that's because it's gone on so long. If Superman had stayed dead as long as Bruce Wayne has remained *hors de combat*, Mike would have had problems too. And at that, he got a lot of hate mail."

BATTHINGS TO COME

With the epic's end nearly upon us, the team is looking forward to the future. "I've missed Bruce Wayne," Dixon says. "Azrael's alone in the Batcave with no Alfred, no Robin, no interplay with Commissioner Gordon. I really, really miss that."

Moench adds that while he too has missed Wayne, "I've been able to have my cake and eat it, too." That's because of his involvement with the second Batman/Predator mini-series, drawn by Paul Gulacy and starring the original Batman, and his work on *Legends of the Dark Knight* and *Batman: Bloodstorm*. The latter, an Elseworlds hardcover graphic novel, is a sequel to *Red Rain*, an alternate reality story in which Batman was a vampire. "It has Bruce Wayne in it," Moench says. "He's a vampire, but he's still Bruce Wayne." *Bloodstorm*, which is being drawn by Kelley Jones, has not yet been added to DC's schedule.

Bloodsucking aside, O'Neil says he won't know what's in store for Wayne after *Zero Hour* concludes until a week-long retreat that will be complete by press time. "There are many aspects to consider," he explains. Two of them are movies, *Batman III* and the still-tentative *Catwoman*, although neither should affect the comics much, he says.

O'Neil hopes to address several concerns this year. One is the level of reality at which Batman operates. "On the one hand, some of our stories are very close to the TV series *NYPD Blue* or Ed McBain's detective novels," he says. "At other times, we do Clayface, which I can't think of as anything but a science fiction concept. Neither approach is good or bad, but we should be consistent. Or should we?"

He's been mulling over another idea for five years, he says. At last, the time may be right for Batwoman. "I want to create [a character] that's worthy of being Batwoman," O'Neil says. He thinks the concept would be ideal for a mini-series or graphic novel—but that's all he'll say on the matter.

Dixon also wants to do a new take on an old character. "I want to create a Penguin for the '90s," he states. "The Penguin, to me, never worked as a character because he's not physically imposing.... Graham Nolan and I want to play him as a schemer and an intellect. He'll have people killed, but he's not gonna do it with an umbrella." He also has plans for a *Detective/Robin* crossover, to take place shortly after "KnightsEnd," in which Lynx and King Snake fight a Gotham gang war. "It will end with one of them winning," Dixon notes.

Moench and Jones are gearing up for another collaboration. *Haunted Gotham* will be set in a preternatural Gotham City. "The supernatural exists, no bones about it. [The story] places Batman in a supernatural reality." The series is probably headed for Elseworlds, but its format has yet to be decided. "It may be a series of mini-series, a maxi- and a mini-series, or a series of minis and a one-shot." Moench anticipates about 12 books' worth of material, but it won't go onto the schedule until Jones finishes *Bloodstorm*.

Above all else, of course, looms *Detective* #700, which is "definitely set," Dixon assures. "It's going to be a big story stretched over a lot of issues. It's got a lot of potential, but that's all I can say."

There's also the possibility that another major storyline will begin immediately after "KnightsEnd," Moench adds. "If we go ahead with that, it'll postpone other ideas we've got. The fact that 'KnightsEnd' is finally coming to an end is amazing, I think. But now it looks like we're not even going to stop to catch our breath."

Craig Shutt is a freelance writer based in Chicago who was really looking forward to seeing the Outsider again.

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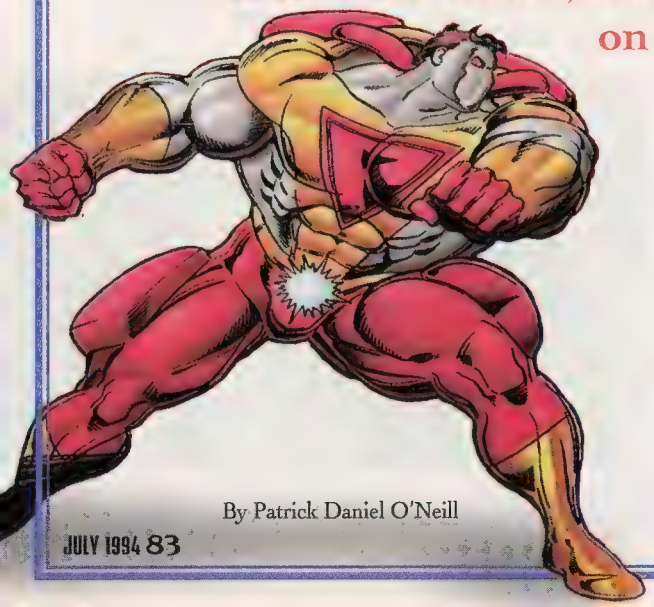
CAREER MOVES

Creator George Pérez reminisces about his 20-year career, the Justice League/Avengers crossover follies, and his upcoming work on Malibu's *UltraForce*.



By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

BRONX-BORN GEORGE PÉREZ is a self-taught artist who after two decades in the business finds himself among those rare few who are acknowledged favorites—not just of longtime comics readers who have followed his work for years—but also of relative newcomers. Now 40 years old, he first came to the attention of fans at age 20 with a run on Marvel's *Avengers*. His reputation grew when he co-created *The New Teen Titans* for DC Comics. He has since garnered accolades for *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Wonder Woman*, *Infinity Gauntlet*, and *Sachs & Violens*. Pérez is currently gearing up for Malibu's new team book, *UltraForce*.

PRIME ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

WIZARD: You've just finished up *Sachs & Violens*, the Epic mini-series written by Peter David. Did you have any qualms about doing a story like that, with adult content?

PÉREZ: Heavens, no! It's all I can do *not* to get more fetishes in.

On the first issue, I was a little more constrained, because I was concerned about doing a book like that. How much of it would come off as prurient, as opposed to a good story with some kinky elements? With all the respect I have for Peter's writing, would the story be strong enough for the readers to see through the initial sleaziness of content?

As it turned out, my fears were unfounded. Then I noticed Peter putting in more stuff, and he noticed me putting in stuff with bondage and leather, and he realized we had hit the right note of perversion.

You had hit the line you couldn't cross?

Right. But first and foremost, it works because we were both trying to tell a story. It's a real challenge to do an urban crime story, where you can't be fanciful and make stuff up. I always wanted to do "good girl art"—I'm as kinky as the next guy, depending on who the next guy is—and I started letting go more.

Part of the reason the first issue isn't as explicit as the later ones is I wanted to give the reader something to look forward to. If J.J. Sachs was shown totally nude from the beginning, we would have thrown all our cards on the table and have had no game left.

Were the scheduling problems on *Sachs & Violens* just another case of overwork on your part?

Yeah—whenever things are delayed, it's overwork, and often some economics as well.

You know, I have gotten to the point that I can say, "No." I've actually turned down a lot of work lately.

So you did the two *Break-Thru* bookends last year for Malibu as an economic tide-over, and now you're doing *UltraForce*?

Yeah, which is basically Malibu's version of the Avengers and Justice League, teaming up their existing characters with new ones. It's also the first book since *Wonder Woman* that I actively campaigned for.

I heard about *UltraForce* from [Malibu Editor] Hank Kanalz, who was calling about my doing three fill-in issues of *Prime*, and he asked me to design the new characters. *UltraForce* #0 will appear as a two-part addition to two issues of *Wizard*, meaning that probably more people will see it than any other Malibu comic up until now.

I said if I was going to design the characters, I'd like to draw the book as well. I don't feel comfortable designing characters for other people to draw. They sent me Gerry Jones's script, and after talking with all the business types, I agreed to do #0 and at least six issues more. I haven't done a legitimate group book since *New Titans*, and I was really jazzed about starting something from the ground floor again.

Sachs & Violens (right) wasn't the first collaboration for Pérez and Peter David. In 1992, they teamed up to do *The Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect,* an alternate-future story that pitted Maestro (below) against the Hulk (bottom).

SACHS & VIOLENS ™ & © PETER DAVID & GEORGE PÉREZ

FUTURE IMPERFECT, HULK, AND MAESTRO ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

Are you also doing something for Bravura at Malibu?

I hope to be. The negotiations are underway. It's called *Gladiator*. It's still in the legal morass. In fact, Jim Lee at Image says they would like to be involved in the negotiation and could maybe offer a better deal. [Image is] another player I hadn't reckoned on.

[But] I really, really enjoy working with Malibu. Financial considerations aside—Lord knows I've made a lot of money working for DC and Marvel—Malibu has a genuine respect for the creative personnel. Even on a work-for-hire basis, they've gone out of their way to help me. I had a slight medical emergency at one point and they were there to help.

They acknowledge talent as the bastion of the industry; they're not going to have any books unless they have talent working on them. They treat the new people with the same professional respect as the established pros.

We met when you were still in high school. I guess the stuff Jim Glenn and I published in our *Factors Unknown* fanzine in 1971 when you were 17 was your first work to see print. How did you make the break into the professional ranks?

Incredible luck. I was making the rounds [at] the conventions, as so many aspiring artists do, right out of high school. I had also begun making the circuit of the publishers—DC, Marvel, Continuity. [The conventions were] where I got my first taste of criticism—which left me shell-shocked and nearly caused me to quit. In hindsight, I realize the criticisms were harsh only because I wasn't used to [them].

I got in with [*Factors Unknown*], but meanwhile Sal Quartuccio [now head of Sal Q Productions] had shown my stuff to [artist] Rich Buckler. Rich needed an assistant and called me up with an offer. I was working as a bank teller at the time.

My first published pro work was on Rich's first issue of Deathlok, *Astonishing Tales* #25. He gave me a two-page cartoon sequence at the end showing how he and Doug Moench came up with Deathlok from discarded ideas in a trash pail. My art being what it was at the time, I penciled everything except the Deathlok figure.

By being Rich's assistant, people at Marvel got to know me. And people like [editor] Jim Salicrup and [writers] David Kraft and Bill Mantlo saw my work, liked it, and got me my first work under my own name. George Tuska needed a break on the Man-Wolf feature in *Creatures on the Loose* and Dave Kraft liked working with me, so he asked me to stay. Around the same time, I was given a fill-in on the Sons of the Tiger feature in *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* #6, but Bill Mantlo asked for me to stay on as well.

Thanks to them, I was given regular work fairly quickly. That was around 1974, only two years out of high school. Within six months after that, Rich Buckler fell behind. Since I was Rich's assistant, they asked me to pencil what was supposed to be a *Fantastic Four* annual and turned into two issues of the regular book [#164-#165].

What did you do as Buckler's assistant?

Basically, I helped him with layout. Or I'd go through his swipe file—batches of comics—looking for suitable swipes for the story he was doing. Since at the time he was doing *Thor* and *Fantastic Four*, that meant lots of Jack Kirby books.

I disliked that intensely, but it was my job. [*Laughs*] He had other assistants, but since I was the new guy on the block, I was given the grunt work. I didn't like doing it that way. I didn't want to be a Kirby clone. I was influenced by Jack, but I didn't want to copy him.

I learned a few tricks of the trade in storytelling from looking at those pages. I learned a lot about why Jack did things in a certain way. It was an education, but I was young, I was impetuous, I was impatient. I wanted to draw, and somehow working in a pseudo-Kirby style wasn't my idea of what I wanted to do.

We actually parted ways before I got my first assignment at Marvel, but Rich was the one who passed on the call from Jim Salicrup to me.

I guess the place you first got to be a fan-favorite was on *Avengers*. How did you wind up with that assignment—at the time, a fairly prestigious job to hand to a newcomer?

It was a prestigious book, but because of the financial structure of payments at the time, with no royalties, it wasn't a book a lot of artists wanted to do. It was a hard book to do because of the number of characters involved. When you're earning the same amount of money for drawing a Captain America story as you are for drawing Captain America and a half-dozen other characters, a lot of artists will opt for handling Captain America alone. So *Avengers* wasn't really a book a lot of people wanted, prestigious as it might have been.

But I always loved *The Avengers*; I loved team books. When I was coming into the business, my dream was always to do *Justice League of America* or *Legion of Super-Heroes*—and ironically, I've still never done the Legion [and probably never will]. At this point, the Legion book is so different from the Legion I had read [as a kid].

Avengers was a book I wanted to draw, but few others did... Despite my deficiencies as an artist at the time, they were pleased to get someone who could bring an enthusiasm that was lacking at the time. It was a tough act to follow after a glory period with John Buscema and Neal Adams. They needed somebody who could go in there and really, really enjoy it. And I did.

You penciled about 30 issues of *Avengers* and you did other Marvel books. Why did you leave Marvel?

Originally, it wasn't an intention of leaving Marvel as opposed to branching out. I know other people were having trouble with Marvel at the time, and [writer] Marv Wolfman had approached me about doing a new Teen Titans book at DC. With DC's track record at the time, I thought I was probably committing myself to only six issues. I agreed to do *The New Teen Titans* only if I got a crack at at least one issue of *Justice League of America*, which was the book I really wanted to do. It seemed like a natural progression from *Avengers*.

A few weeks later, I got a phone call when Dick Dillin [the artist who had drawn more than 100 issues of *JLA*] died, and I ended up getting to draw *Justice League* for all the wrong reasons. As it turned out, *Justice League* became a passing acquaintance and *Titans* was a big blockbuster.

So for a time, I was doing *Avengers*, *Titans*, and *Justice League*. And I decided to drop *Avengers* because it was the one that I'd been doing the longest and the others were just too new to drop.

So my departure from Marvel was amicable at the time. It didn't become rancorous until the problems with the Justice League/Avengers crossover...

Let's get back to that in a moment. I want to go through your early days on the *Titans*. When Marv called you and said he wanted to do a new version of the Teen Titans, how much had he already formalized then?

The characters were pretty much already conceived and blueprinted, to a limited degree, by Marv and by Len Wein, both of whom were big Titans fans in their youths. This was a big break for them.

They already knew what kind of characters they wanted: a cosmic character, a cyborg, and someone a little more magical. They gave me the names and where they wanted to go with it, such as Raven's soulself, which I visualized as [the Larry Trainor version of] Negative Man [from the old] Doom Patrol. I went home and designed each character once, came in with the designs, and they liked them all. I removed the belt from Raven's outfit, and Joe Orlando came in and saw Starfire and said, "Make her hair longer," and created one of her strongest visual trademarks.

My early designs didn't have the identifiable facial features [the characters] later developed; that didn't come until I started casting them in my mind and using real people as my influences, mostly friends of mine. Raven changed so drastically that we did a story in *Titans* showing that the facial changes were a manifestation of her powers.

When did you and Marv realize that *Titans* was becoming the closest thing DC had to the sales success of Marvel's *X-Men*?

I think it was when the letters started coming in. Since there were no royalties back then, we had no benchmark [with which] to judge the sales figures. But we noticed the reaction we were getting. I think #8 [cover dated June 1981, with the story "A Day in the Lives..."] was the point we felt the book was becoming special, because we were experimenting with

Hawkeye, the avenging archer.

THOR ™ & © MARVEL COMICS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.

the personalities of the characters over the action. The reaction to that issue was so good: people were talking about the book, we started to see how many books we were signing at conventions, the press began to comment on *Titans* and tell us we [produced] a hot book...and then the company told us how sales on each issue were climbing.

Titans's success gave DC something it had been lacking until then: a sense of legitimacy in the market, which it hadn't had in years. *Titans* became the sole DC book in the direct market top 10 lists. It was very gratifying, especially since it could be traced to the creators—people were picking it up because of Marv, me, and Len. It helped show that creators do make a difference on a book.

Did you have a favorite among the Titans?

My favorite to draw was Starfire, because she was made for any young male artist to enjoy. The one character I enjoyed developing was Cyborg: he was an inner-city youth, as I was. It allowed me a little more input to his character than I had with the others. Neither Marv nor I is cosmic, so Starfire was pretty much anyone's call; on Raven, I deferred to Marv, because he had done *Tomb of Dracula* and understood that mystic stuff; but Cyborg was from a situation that was alien to Marv on a first-hand basis. He had taught high school in Brooklyn, but that's not the same as growing up in the ghetto. There's also something about Cyborg being big but tender; I've always had a real liking for that type of character.

Eventually, Marv became the editor...

Actually, Marv and I together. Marv refused to be my boss, so he graciously made me co-editor.

Because of the way we worked—particularly after royalties started and before this became standard policy in the field—Marv deferred half his plotting rate and plotting royalty to me. Marv was the first to acknowledge the artist's contribution to the plotting. In a business, especially in the last couple of years, where the writer and artist seem to be at war with each other, this is an example of what it can be like if two people have enough respect for each other to acknowledge that both are important.

Your run on *JLA* was much like your run on *Avengers*—you were in there for 10 issues or so, then gone. Was it deadlines again?

By that time, I was beginning to slow down. As I was starting to make a conscious effort to become a better artist, I realized that that in itself takes time. I started to slow down and get more anatomy books and architecture books.

Titans had become more my and Marv's baby, and I started to put more of my effort there and *JLA* started to suffer. Suddenly, my interest on *JLA* lagged. *Titans* was much more personal to me, and DC was asking for more Titans tie-ins, mini-series, and such. It became impossible to handle anything in addition to *Titans*. I dropped *JLA* knowing my career had changed to the point where I was no longer interested in doing the books I had once built all my goals on; now I was drawing books that I would never have thought about in the past. I didn't grow up thinking I'd draw the Teen Titans.

Let's get back to the Justice League/Avengers crossover. I gather the problem was that Marvel—and specifically Jim Shooter, in your mind—was less than forthcoming in approving the plot and things like that.

That would be simplifying it to Jim's detriment.

The first fault was specifically Len Wein's—not a slam at Len, by the way. Len approved my starting to pencil the plot that Gerry Conway had provided. I realized there were lots of holes in it and asked if I could fill them up as I went along. Basically, they put their faith in me, since I knew both groups of characters.

It wasn't until I'd finished more than 20 pages that I received a call and discovered that Len had given me the go-ahead before the plot had even been sent to Jim Shooter for approval. And the flaws I found in it were the same ones Jim found, pretty much. I was fixing it as I went along, and Jim, having

Of all the Titans, Pérez says he enjoyed drawing Starfire (left) the most. His newest project is *UltraForce* for Malibu Comics (below).

UltraForce ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc. Starfire ™ & © DC Comics.

JLA/Avengers: what was and what may never be.

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA AND BATMAN™ & © DC COMICS. AVENGERS AND CAPTAIN AMERICA™ & © MARVEL COMICS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

worked with me on *Avengers*, should have known I would do that.

But Jim, from what I can tell, thought DC had treated him badly on his last stint with the company, and this was a slight he was not going to take, that a major project was being done without his official okey-dokey. To me, it seemed, this was now going to be revenge. It would be payback for a lot of years—and my work was being held hostage.

At first, I was angry with Len for having me start [working] with a plot that was not approved; then I got angry with Jim... Everything he was complaining about—in my mind—could easily be taken care of; in fact, I was already taking care of it. He started to get picayune about things—why this character shouldn't be here—as opposed to the idea that this was a fan's dream. It was a contrivance in and of itself. [I said,] "We can get around all this. Let's produce this because it's a book everyone's been waiting for."

Unfortunately, it became a gigantic pissing contest... At one point, they asked for Roy Thomas to redo the plot, utilizing as many of the pages I had drawn as possible. But by that point, the damage was done. It got to the point where I refused to do the fourth cover for the Black Widow story in *Marvel Fanfare* #13. I told the editor, Al Milgrom, "I'm broken. I can't do any more work for Marvel Comics as long as Jim Shooter is editor-in-chief."

That's when I signed the exclusive contract with DC, to ensure this wouldn't become an empty threat. I'd made myself legally unable to go to Marvel, even if I changed my mind. It might have cost me money—but I was angry.

One thing I should point out: Jim Shooter and I have long [since] buried the hatchet. I've told him I would gladly do a cover for Defiant if he needs one. I don't want people to infer that I am still carrying a grudge.

[*For more on the JLA/Avengers crossover, see sidebar. —Ed.*]

What caused you to leave *Titans*?

I left, finally, because I was a victim of the book's success. In order to handle the work—which by then was only layouts, not finished pencils—I was, in my mind, hacking stuff out. And the sales were still going through the roof. I realized I could do less than my best work and the book would still sell. That's good financially, but it didn't give me any gratification as an artist when people could only judge me by what I considered mediocre work.

I can't just take the money and run. My wife often criticizes me: "What's the matter, George? Are you afraid of success?"

The next thing I did was *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, again with Marv.

Before 1985, different DC heroes lived on different Earths. With a "maxi-series" like *Crisis*, intended to merge the different Earths into one and essentially start the DC Universe anew, there had to be an awful lot of intraoffice politics involved as you were working on it.

Oh, yeah. Considering it was intended to be a cleaning out of dead weight and an attempt to reorganize the DC Universe, and since it was the first intracompany crossover, it was bound to stomp on a few toes.

There were meetings held, before the first issue was begun, with other writers and editors. DC had a policy at the time of being creator-friendly and creator-receptive; there were a lot of artist/editors and writer/editors and people who were given the respect of having their opinions heard when it came to their characters. Here we were coming in with a series—that DC itself had wanted!—to clean house and basically tell some people working on long-established stories that their stories would be moot or have to be adjusted to fit *Crisis*. To some extent in the office, there were people who simply saw this as DC jumping on Marvel's *Secret Wars* bandwagon. They had very little confidence in it.

At what point while doing *Crisis* did you realize that DC was going to wipe out the existing Wonder Woman and that you wanted to redesign her?

I'd been wanting to do a Wonder Woman mini-series since I did *New Teen Titans* #11, where [the Titans] went to Paradise Island. I had an idea for a "trial of the gods"-type of story. But I was so busy, I never got around to it.

You know, we were supposed to kill Superman at the end of *Crisis*, too.

Oh, really?

But DC backpedaled at the last moment, because they had no replacement. John Byrne [who later revamped Superman] wasn't part of the equation yet. They had no plans for Wonder Woman, either, but they didn't care; she sim-

ply wasn't as important on a corporate level.

After John Byrne's work on Superman and Frank Miller's on Batman, DC realized now they had to bring back Wonder Woman. I thought this could be interesting. Janice Race was slated to be the new editor, they had an artist they weren't happy with, and they weren't happy with the plot, even after three or four rewrites. It seemed as though Wonder Woman would again be the girl left out of the boys' club—a victim of indifference.

I went to Janice and said if she gave me time to do some research, I would take a crack at drawing the book. I wanted a hand in the plotting, too. They gave me 10 months to work on it [and let me use] as much as I could of Greg Potter's original plot, which had things in it a lot of people disliked, particularly the women in the company.

Clockwise from bottom: Wonder Woman in a tight spot, Thanos protecting his Infinity Gauntlet, and more of the Titans.

The women on staff viewed Greg's original concept as one in which Wonder Woman was either a victim of or an enemy to men, and they thought it was sending out a misogynist message. Many of them didn't like the idea that every Amazon was reincarnated from a murdered woman and carried the memories of that murder with them.

Greg downplayed the mythological elements more than I did; he [also] had Wonder Woman already in Man's World by the end of *Wonder Woman* #1, but I [pushed it back] to #3. My goal was to use the mythological elements to make her more than just a female Superman and give her a much more humanist, if not feminist, slant.

In that time, Janice left and I got Karen Berger as editor...giving me exactly what I wanted—a woman editor and a good editor.

You didn't write *Wonder Woman* from the beginning...

And that was because of Karen. Karen didn't grow up a superhero fan, so a lot of this stuff she has learned as she went along. But she has always appreciated the written word. She doesn't think it's something that is part of everyone's DNA makeup—some people are writers, some people are not.

She knew I had co-plotted *Titans* and that I was making suggestions to Len Wein on the dialogue of *Wonder Woman*. She knew I had certain ideas about writing. Finally, with #17, Len left the book and I started to write it. It was a turning point for Wonder Woman as a character, so it seemed like a good time to make the change.

I wrote the first 10 pages twice, because Karen felt there were major flaws: a tendency to be wordy, a tendency for me as a writer to be fighting myself as an artist. I appreciated the fact that she wasn't intimidated by my favorite reputation: "You are the person doing *Wonder Woman* and the book is the most important thing," she said. And I became a better writer because of Karen Berger.

And somewhere in there, you resolved things and went back to doing some work for Marvel. I remember saying to you in '91 that I thought you were crazy to try to do two mini-series—Marvel's *Infinity Gauntlet* and DC's *War of the Gods*—in the same summer.

It was a stupid thing to do, I confess.

So all the problems with those two series—replacement artists, fouled-up scheduling, and the lot—happened because you made a bad decision?

Oh, yeah. I didn't realize that I'm not as young as I was, and no matter how much I compromised on the artwork—*War of the Gods* was supposed to be just layouts on my side—I can't seem to work that way. I always end up wanting to do more and more, and if I feel dissatisfied, I end up slowing down.

War of the Gods was supposed to be, in my mind, a celebration of Wonder Woman's 50th anniversary. That was the first thing DC wanted to discard. It was a time when DC had paid me advance money for the book, and I needed the money. I wanted to [cancel the mini-series] desperately, but I couldn't. Nobody else wanted the book. And then, to top it all off, Karen Berger went into labor.

The editor was now an inexperienced person... I did the plot for *War of the Gods* a year before the first issue came out, and up until the first issue came out, I was getting calls from writers [of crossover books] who had never even heard about it. It was a cursed book.

So you dropped *Infinity Gauntlet* because you were contractually bound to do *War of the Gods*?

In the case of Marvel's *Infinity Gauntlet*, [editor] Craig Anderson acted professionally. He was

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right: I was falling behind [on deadlines] and he intended to replace me for just the last half of #4.

This is going to sound really bitchy, but I'll have to live with that. I was becoming, by that point, disenchanted with *Infinity Gauntlet*... I thought the story was worth maybe two issues. It was so padded out—how many times will these people fight Thanos, be defeated, [and be brought] back?

So that first fill-in—after making me angry because my pride was hurt—gave me the initiative to say I didn't feel like finishing [the series]. I thought Ron Lim should have drawn it from the beginning.

I thought this was to be the final chapter of the Thanos saga. When I heard about *Infinity War* and *Infinity Crusade*, I was just as glad to be out of it, because I would have felt pretty betrayed. How many times can you go back to this well?

To end this up with a look to the future, quickly tell me about the upcoming *Giant-Man* mini-series you're writing.

I got a call from [Marvel] on behalf of [editor] Ralph Macchio. Having brought back Hank Pym as Giant-Man, Marvel wanted to do something to get the character noticed again. They wanted to show that "being a giant can be cool." The hard part was finding a hook—in a world full of Hulks and mutants, what makes Giant-Man special? He's never been more than a second-stringer.

I'm doing it as tribute to the old 1950s "giant creature" films. Since he used to be Ant-Man, the idea of giant ants seemed perfect. The first issue opens with a shot of him riding a flying ant...and only until you turn the page do you realize that he's not ant-sized, the ants are giant-sized! They're chasing a woman who is running from other giant ants [like in the film] *Them*.

Other movies I'll be paying tribute to are *Tarantula*, *The Amazing Colossal Man*, *Attack of the 50-Foot Woman*—guess what happens to Jan Van Dyne [aka Wasp]?

Basically, what I'm doing is a 1950s Marvel monster comic!

After so many years of doing work for hire, and with your creator-owned *Gladiator* on the board, are you leaning more towards the characters you grew up with or newer, creator-owned projects?

While certain characters—the Justice League, Superman, things like that—will always be attractive, I'm not looking to do any long-term work-for-hire projects. I'm doing *UltraForce* with a six-issue commitment, but I'd rather concentrate on my own stuff and on occasional special projects on a work-for-hire basis.

Can you ever see yourself working outside of comics?

No way—it's my career, my way of making a living. ☆

Crisis on Infinite Earths, Flash and Psycho Pirate ™ & © DC Comics.

The Flash's last stand.

JLA/AVENGERS: WHAT HAPPENED?

A lot of mystery surrounds the unpublished 1983 DC/Marvel Justice League of America/Avengers crossover. After artist George Pérez addressed the controversy in his interview with Patrick Daniel O'Neill, *Wizard* contacted Jim Shooter and Dick Giordano to see if Marvel's then editor-in-chief and DC's then vice president and executive editor, respectively, could set the record straight.

Shooter's response to Pérez's comments:

"George is very much misinformed.

*"The plot for the JLA/Avengers [book] had indeed been submitted to me before George started drawing it. It was weak, full of holes, and replete with continuity glitches. I rejected it in writing. Dick Giordano subsequently telephoned me to ask if I would mind if he told [writer] Gerry Conway that **DC** had rejected the plot instead of me, for some strange reason of internal politics which I never did understand. I said I didn't care what DC did internally as long as I got a revised plot.*

"A month or two later, I heard a rumor that George Pérez had drawn 21 pages of the rejected plot! I couldn't get Dick on the phone, so I sent him a telegram telling him to stop work immediately.

"Dick sent me copies of the pages. To George's credit, he had indeed fixed many, but not all, of the problems. I judged that most of the pages were not only usable but excellent, and that the unusable pages could be fixed with minor corrections. I asked that the corrections be done and a revised plot be submitted before work progressed.

*"I'm not sure what went on at DC, but at one point Dick took me to lunch and asked that they be allowed to finish the book as originally plotted. Again, he cited DC's internal political strife. His position was basically this: who cares if it's wrong or bad, it'll sell like crazy anyway. He confirmed those sentiments later in a letter to me. Well, **I** cared if it was wrong or bad, and I insisted on corrections and a revised plot.*

"The first time I knew that George was angry at me was when I read an interview in a fan magazine in which he unjustly condemned me. Why he didn't simply call me and ask me what was going on amazes me to this day. George shouldn't make presumptions about my motives.

*"I had no vendetta against DC. I was in fact the one who **reinstated** the crossovers, along with [DC President and Publisher] Jenette Kahn. Why would I sabotage them?*

"The president and business affairs brass of Marvel backed my position to the point that they were willing to let the project die, taking perhaps several hundred thousand dollars off of our bottom line. They would not have allowed such an event to occur over some personal vendetta of mine, I assure you."

Giordano declined to comment on the matter, instead referring inquirers to an edition of his "Meanwhile..." column. The column ran in DC issues cover dated January 1985. DC Comics says that the column accurately reflects DC's feelings at that time.

In the column, Giordano admitted that he (not Len Wein, as Pérez believes) was at fault for allowing Pérez to begin penciling the crossover without getting written approval of the plot from Shooter, as Shooter had requested. "I thought this request to be logical but largely a formality," Giordano wrote.

In a letter to Shooter that he reprinted in the "Meanwhile..." column, Giordano conceded that the original script had been somewhat problematic. "Yes, there still remain some questions left unanswered in the plot, but no more or less than are left unanswered in most plots. More often than not, these questions are resolved while the work is in progress, and I'm sure that you'll agree the levels of skill possessed by George Pérez, [writer] Roy Thomas, Len Wein, and myself are sufficient to resolve those plot 'holes' to everyone's satisfaction." In the column, Giordano added, "With one page and a few panels redrawn and a few copy changes, the motivations for the characters' behavior were right..." He came to believe that Shooter was stalling plot approval.

Giordano's conclusion? "In my view, the JLA/Avengers book will not be published, because somebody, or several somebodies, at Marvel simply doesn't want it to be published," presumably a reference to Marvel's editorial team. He then apologized to the fans for not being able to print the crossover.

Will the unfinished crossover someday be published? Although both publishers now have different editorial teams, it seems unlikely. Neal Pozner, DC's group editor of creative services, says that although he as a reader would like to see it published, DC doesn't feel that the time is right for it. A high-level Marvel source says that while the company always entertains new ideas and concepts, this particular project's status—it was officially canceled over 10 years ago—has not changed.

—Brian Cunningham

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For a list of winners, available after August 1, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Savage Dragon Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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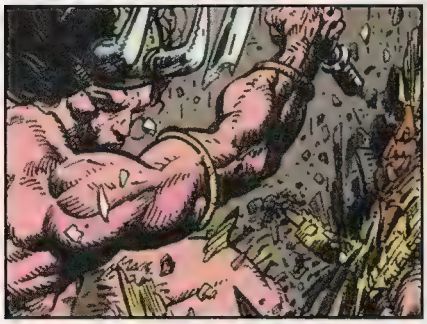
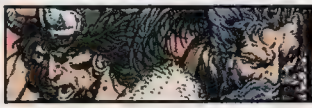
A NEW HYBORIAN AGE





By Henry T. Colonna III

After countless novels, comics, magazines, movies, and cartoons, the man they now call **Conan the Adventurer** *returns to comics.*

Is the comics world ready for a Conan revival? Although the cancellation of *Conan the Barbarian* after issue #275 last December suggested that Marvel Comics was losing interest in the character from the long-ago Hyborian Age, the publisher was in fact setting the stage for the new comic book adventures of Robert E. Howard's enduring sword-slinger.

In April, three series, two of them new, ushered in an exciting new Conan era. *Conan Classic* #1 reprinted Barry Smith (now Windsor-Smith) and Roy Thomas' 25-year-old *Conan the Barbarian* #1. It was complemented by *The Savage Sword of Conan the Barbarian* #222, which contained a John Buscema-drawn interpretation of *Barbarian* #1. The real star of the month, however, was the premiere of *Conan the Adventurer*, which shares the same name as the Conan animated series that debuted in September 1993.

Despite its name, and unlike the comics named after and based on the Batman and X-Men animated series, *Conan the Adventurer* will have little in common with the TV show. According to the book's artist Rafael Kayanan, "Only the timing is going to be similar; the comic is not going to have any link to the animated series. It's totally different, closer in tone to the original 24 issues [of *Conan the Barbarian*]."

Roy Thomas, the veteran Conan scribe who is scripting the *Adventurer* comic, says that the book's launch is related to the debut of the animated series "only in the sense that *Conan* has not been the popular book it had been in the 1970s during the John Buscema period. You see, during the John Buscema period, the comic was one of Marvel's two or three top sellers. It sold fine even after I left writing it for a few years, but then it sort of gradually sank down. After all, there have been many thousands of pages of material about Conan," Thomas notes, suggesting that readers may have become slightly tired of one Conan story after another. "I myself must have written five or six thousand pages about Conan in comic form....

"But with *Conan the Adventurer* being on television, and another [network cartoon] show they are developing teaming Conan with kids, I'm sure that they decided that this was a good time for more exposure."

"Maybe Marvel was thinking they could get some new readers," Kayanan says, adding, "I don't even know if the new readers and the people watching the animated series would be the same people. The comic is more for those who are reading comics [and] want to see something different from superheroes."

Thomas says that Kayanan's participation was a major factor in the launch of this truly different book. "Since Rafael was both interested and available for this book, we decided that we would bring out a color comic again," he notes. "If it hadn't been for Rafael or some particularly appropriate artist, we probably would have continued with *Savage Sword of Conan*. But as it is, we end up with four Conan books a month, including two black-and-white and two color—two original and two reprint. I get to do a sort of a history of Conan the Barbarian [in the two original books]. I get to [write some stories] about him in the present at the same time as we play around with the past."

Conan the Adventurer was largely planned by artist Kayanan and co-editor Richard Ashford. "Rafael and Richard Ashford had discussed a general notion of a storyline, and when that came in I agreed with it," Thomas recalls. "Just as Barry always had some sort of story input—I always gave him a lot of freedom to add his own thing, unless it was a straight adaptation—[and] just like Jack Kirby did with people, or Neal Adams, or any of the better artists."

Kayanan got the *Adventurer* assignment after doing some pinups for *The Savage Sword of Conan the Barbarian*. Editor Ashford also saw a personal adaptation of Dante's *Inferno* that Kayanan was working on. The artist was subsequently set up to draw the sequel to the classic high-intrigue story "Red Nails" in *Savage Sword* #211-#213, #215, and #217. After seeing Kayanan's Conan work, Ashford decided that he was the right artist for *Conan the Adventurer*.

What was the thinking behind *Conan the Adventurer*? Kayanan: "Creatively, [editors] Richard Ashford and Mike Kraiger were all fans of the early Conan books and comics, and so was I." As part of their effort to reformulate Conan's character, the artist continues, "we decided to go back to what really made us pick up the books. If we had thought of it as the animated series, it would not have been the same."

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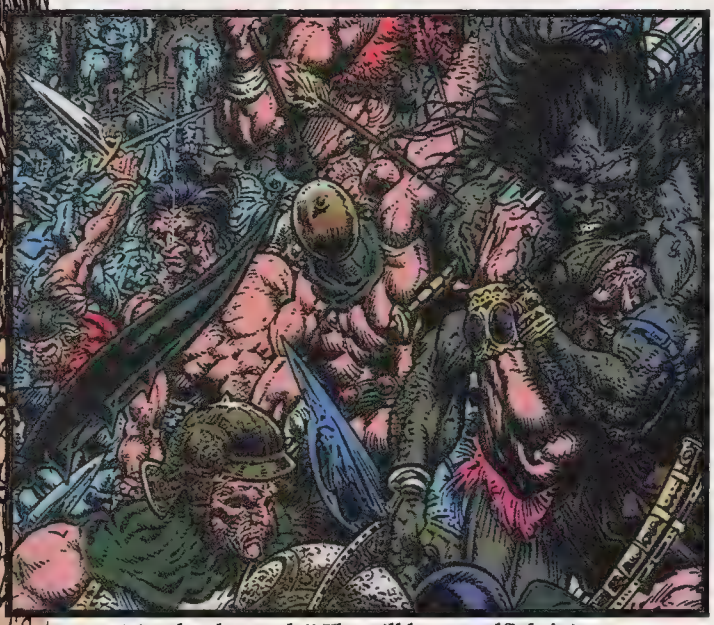
A Look into the Unknown

Adventurer will be set in a heretofore largely unexplored stage of Conan's life: his teenage years. "Near the later part of the original *Conan* series, Conan had become more like a superhero," Kayanan says. "We want to get him back to the way he was, with more of the barbarian textures and the mystical feel."

Kayanan feels that stories in the sword-and-sorcery genre often have "too much focus on the surface aspects and imagery, instead of more of the intellectual approach of manipulating the reader." Conan is more to Kayanan than the "hack and slash" image that the character's name conjures for many. "You can see lots of symbolism in Conan. He is the innocent out in the world who does not understand [what's happening around him], especially in the [world] we are doing now. He is young and naïve, and there are going to be a lot of lessons learned in [his] life. He is definitely going to be there for entertainment, though."

Being the clever man overcoming the perplexing ways of the world is certainly the key to Conan's continuing appeal, and Kayanan clearly understands this. "Conan is a character who has his own wits about him," the artist notes. "He lives in a world where things are not explained right away. He knows when to get out of tight situations, while the guy next to him dies. He has his own individuality. The readership likes the feel to the Howard books, that uncertain feel to his world."



It's a battle royale!! There'll be swordfightin' aplenty in the new *Conan the Adventurer*.

Kayanan has in mind a very specific direction for the character in the new comic. "We are going to start off in mid-battle, but as it progresses it will become more like life lessons for Conan. We want it to seem that when he appears in the Smith issues, he already has this history behind him. He has different mentors and powers of observation, which is one of the things that really helps him to survive.

"I also want to concentrate on the warrior society. Right now, it's very aggressive, but I want to bring in an Eastern feel as well. We have quite a balance here, like a psychological order, in addition to the savagery." Kayanan adds that even though Conan was created decades ago, he could be considered an antihero, a type of character that's currently enjoying tremendous popularity.

By allowing others, including his wife Dann, to have input, Thomas says that he's helping to keep Conan fresh, which is one of his foremost goals. "The people who have been reading *Conan the Barbarian* and still read *Savage Sword* and know the history of [the] comics: [I want] to make those people happy and at the same time do stories that have a few surprises for them. We may have some backup features in some of the issues to tell some of the points that people might miss if they have not been following Conan for a long time."

What most helps him keep Conan vital, Thomas says, is reading. "I read a lot—not sword-and-sorcery, but I do like to read ancient history. I almost became an Egyptologist once, in fact, but I didn't because of the money; it just didn't work out. I probably would not have enjoyed that as much as I enjoy comics, and maybe I'm better off with comics," he chuckles. "I just keep reading and getting input, and also reading the old stories of Robert E. Howard for inspiration—even the non-Conan stories."

But readers won't need a grasp of Conan arcana to enjoy *Conan the Adventurer*. "We are not telling [old Conan stories] all over again, and we are not contradicting any of it," Thomas says. "We are working around it in such a way that no one needs to be familiar with the older issues in order to make sense of it." That's why some of the familiar characters from Marvel Conan lore will be missing. Thomas won't entirely rule out using characters like Red Sonja, Thulsa Doom, or Kull, but "one of the things that I do not want to do is be inconsistent with what has gone before. Red Sonja would not be around for several years yet, and the same with most of the others. It has been established when Conan first met them.

"If something occurs so that they can be behind the scenes, or [in] a parallel story, we could probably do it. There are characters who could have a past with Conan that had never been mentioned. It took a number of months—really the whole first year [of *Conan the Barbarian*]—just to get him into the period when he is a thief in Zamora at the time of 'Tower of the Elephant' [the earliest episode in Conan's life written by Howard] and the next few stories after that. This is going to be a young Conan, although he does not always look it. He will be about 17 years old and already over six feet tall, so he has not really met [supporting characters like Red Sonja] yet, but there may be some foreshadowing; we may play around with it for a bit."

Many Stories to be Told

Although *Conan the Adventurer* will largely contain original stories, Thomas says that he may adapt Conan prose tales from the Tor novel series as well as non-Conan stories by Howard and other authors. Thomas cites the first Red Sonja story from *Conan the Barbarian* as an example: Howard's Red Sonja was not a Conan character, but Thomas placed her in Conan's supporting cast and adapted Howard's original Red Sonja story to fit into Conan continuity. "We won't be adapting any Conan stories done by Robert E. Howard, L. Sprague de Camp, and Lin Carter." Those stories, he notes, have already been adapted in *Conan the Barbarian* and *Savage Sword of Conan*. "But there are a lot of elements we could take from some of the Tor novels that cover his early life.

"Those stories we generally do not count as being part of the 'Marvel Conan,'" he continues. "There's no hostility there, but by the time the Tor books came out—around 1980, which was around the time I had left Conan—we had already covered the same incidents, and there are a lot of things in the Tor books and the comics which just won't gel...

"We have adapted some of the novels into the comics. We've got a good relation with the Tor people. We hope to do more adaptations later on with due credit. But we really do not have any plans for this currently. Right now, we have about 15 issues in this one storyline about this group of warriors searching for [a] talisman, with some side adventures."

Thomas explains that the plot of the first long story arc will deal with "a number of warriors looking for the same talisman... Conan keeps meeting these various people in ones or twos and slowly realizes that they either like each other or don't. Eventually, they all get together to form a team [to go after the talisman], and the story will climax in issue #15.

"On the one hand, these were separate stories, but on the other hand, there was a direction there, instead of there just being a bunch of separate stories. That was challenging to me because that was something new and different that we had not done with young Conan before." It was also challenging, Thomas says, to work the story in between the established parts of Conan's life.

The Art's the Thing

Kayanan's prime challenge has been giving *Conan the Adventurer* the time and devotion it deserves. Apparently, the effort that Kayanan is putting into the comic has created the need for another artist to help out. "In the middle of the first storyline, because Rafael put so much into it," Thomas notes, "we are having three issues with another very good artist, John Watkiss, who has done another very nice job." Watkiss's previous work includes Vertigo/DC's *Sandman* #39 and #52 and *Sandman Mystery Theatre* #5-#8. "He will do three separate stories, right in the middle—numbers 7, 8, and 9—of the 12 issues that Rafael is definitely going to do, before Rafael decides what direction he wants to take."

Despite that interruption, Thomas enjoys working with Kayanan. "He works in these very loose drawings," the writer says. "He tosses in things and I toss in things.... We are having a lot of fun. With all the work and detail that Rafael is putting into this, it's amazing that he is getting [so many] issues out in a 15-month period of time."

Some observers—including Marvel, which in its solicitations describes Kayanan's work as "Barry Windsor-Smith-like"—have compared Kayanan's style to that of the original *Conan the Barbarian* artist. Kayanan, however, doesn't feel that their styles are all that similar. "I think that if people looked at [my work] closer, they would see that it does not look like his work. Some things are similar, like the hair, but if you look at his objects, I have a whole different approach.

"I think of movies in a lot in my imagery; there's lots of concentration on those things. I can see as much Frazetta as Windsor-Smith. I think people just see the hair. I also think that when I did the sequel to 'Red Nails,' I did not want the work to look like a huge jump between Conans. I remember hating as a kid when artists would change and everything would look totally different." He says that he appreciates many artists' approaches to Conan. For instance, he admires Buscema's "lumbering approach and consistency of characters: one guy looks exactly alike all through the book. Also, Frazetta has a way of using the armor and the swords in such a way that they were designed around the gesture of the figure."

"There is a surface similarity in certain ways," Thomas says, "but if you looked at other stuff, you wouldn't mistake it for Barry's, except to the extent that they both had the same approach in intensity. It's as if the best of Barry's work had sprung full-blown instead of building as it did over the period of a year or two in *Conan the Barbarian*. It took about three issues before he really turned in a first-rate set of pencils, and it took all the way into the last three books [for his art] to really come into fruition. Of course, he was inking himself then, too. Barry was a relatively new artist at the time, and younger, while Rafael has been around longer. He did the *America vs. the Justice Society* [for DC] and the *Hawkmoon* book for First, so he comes in with more experience."

Rafael Kayanan will follow in the footsteps of some legendary artists: Buscema, Windsor-Smith, and Jusko, who painted the Conan shown below.

Why Conan Stands Alone

Thomas feels that Kayanan's experience and attention to detail befits a character of Conan's complexity. "Most of the characters that are heralded as being complex in comics are not, really—they are just examples of the neuroses of the writers who write them," the writer says. "They may be complex, but that does not make them particularly interesting to me. What makes Conan interesting to me is that he is elemental. He was created to be that way. We have to add a little more—you can't do thousands and thousands of pages without adding a little more to him than Robert E. Howard did in a few dozen stories."

Speaking of those thousands of pages, Thomas says that Conan hasn't invaded his personal life too often. He's never even dreamt about the character, although "one time I dressed up as Conan and my wife dressed up as Red Sonja and the next year we reversed it. I got pinched on the butt in a nightclub in the L.A. area by someone who thought I was a girl."

How does Conan veteran Thomas feel about those who have never given the character a chance? He says, "Hey, Conan is an acquired taste. I was not even his biggest fan in the beginning. I had copies of the paperbacks that I had bought for Frazetta's covers, but I did not even read the stories all the way through.

"I [became] a fan of Robert E. Howard. Once that took over, I collected everything he ever wrote. It continued even past when I was not writing the comic. Even John Buscema is coming back to Conan because he missed the characters and got tired of superheroes, so he did that 50-page redraw of *Conan the Barbarian* #1. He was supposed to be the original *Conan* artist." (Windsor-Smith said in *Wizard* #28 that he thinks he was hired as the original artist because, as a fairly new talent, Marvel didn't have to pay him as much as Buscema, at the time one of the highest-paid artists in comics.)

So why should comic fans who are tired of the standard superhero fare give *Conan the Adventurer* a shot? "Because basically," answers Thomas, "it still has the same kinds of elements they like, but it takes place in another kind of fantasy setting. For one thing, it has heroes, villains, supervillains—whether they be monsters, creatures, or sorcerers—who are the equivalent of Dr. Doom. The only major difference is that it doesn't have a modern setting. So the heroic ideal is still present in *Conan*. If it wasn't, we wouldn't have been interested in it back in 1970." ☆

1970's *Conan the Barbarian* #1.

The recolored and reprinted version, *Conan Classic* #1.

Henry T. Colonna III runs a small collection agency in Chesapeake, Va. He also is the head waiter at an avant-garde coffeehouse named Cabaret Voltaire. He looks like Hercules.

HOWARD'S END

Robert E. Howard, creator of Conan and a host of other heroic fantasy characters, was born in Texas in 1906. A regular contributor to the 1930s pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, Howard's creations include King Kull, the former denizen of sunken Atlantis; Solomon Kane, the Puritan adventurer; and Bran Mak Morn, the Celtic wanderer from Ireland.

Most of these stories were written over a very short period of time; Howard shot himself to death in 1936 upon learning that his mother had fallen into a terminal coma caused by tuberculosis. It has been well documented that Howard's mother was extremely possessive of her son, who apparently couldn't bear the thought of losing her.

By the 1950s, Howard had been all but forgotten. But then specialty publisher Gnome Press brought out a series of volumes collecting the author's novels and short stories about Conan. The last of these, *Tales of Conan*, included material by fantasy writer L. Sprague de Camp based on notes and unfinished manuscripts that Howard had planned to put into story form.

A decade later, Lancer Books launched a series of paperback reprints of the Gnome volumes. These attracted public attention thanks to the covers by noted illustrator Frank Frazetta, who acquired a sizable measure of fame because of them. The Lancer editions helped return Conan to popularity. As before, de Camp again contributed to these books, as did his colleague, Lin Carter. Both also wrote original Conan stories based on the outline of the barbarian's life that was developed by Howard and other authors.

The success of the Conan line led Lancer and its successors to republish much of Howard's other work, including the Kull and Solomon Kane stories.

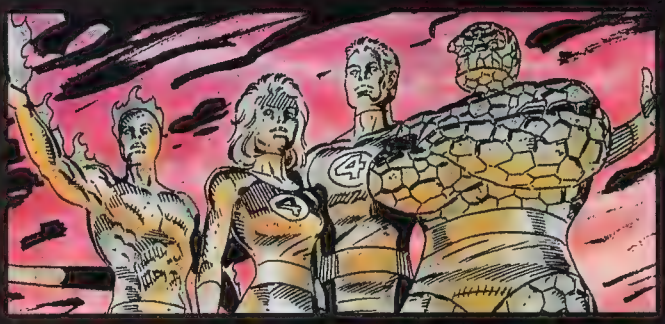
In 1970, at the urging of Roy Thomas, Marvel licensed the character from Howard's estate, and in October began publishing a full-color *Conan the Barbarian* series written by Thomas. *Barbarian* was initially drawn by relative newcomer Barry Smith (later Windsor-Smith), then by Gil Kane, and then for several years by John Buscema. It was joined in August 1974 by *The Savage Sword of Conan the Barbarian*, a black-and-white magazine. (*Savage Sword*, as a magazine, didn't need approval from the Comics Code Authority, and therefore contained a large amount of violence.) A quarterly full-color comic, *King Conan*, debuted in March 1980. This series, which became *Conan the King* in '84, depicted an older Conan, ruler of Aquilonia, the land he acquired by leading a revolt against and killing King Numedides.

Marvel also published a six-issue *Solomon Kane* mini-series (1985-86) and multiple, short-lived volumes of *Kull the Conqueror* and *Red Sonja*. *Kull*'s most successful volume, its first, premiered in June 1971 and ended in October 1978 after 29 issues. *Red Sonja*, loosely based on a minor Howard character named Red Sonya, had runs in 1977-79, 1983, and 1986. A black-and-white reprint magazine, *Conan Saga*, debuted in June 1987.

But interest in comic book sword-and-sorcery slowly waned. The character failed to pick up much steam despite two successful films starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, 1982's *Conan the Barbarian* and 1984's *Conan the Destroyer*. Marvel canceled *Conan the King* in November '89, and *Conan the Barbarian* ended with issue #275 last December.

Ironically, the character was restored to popularity by the animated *Conan the Adventurer* TV series, which debuted three months before the last issue of *Conan the Barbarian*. The series, which currently airs in syndication on weekdays or on CBS on Saturday mornings, inspired the April 1994 launch of an original color series, *Conan the Adventurer*, and a reprint title, *Conan Classic*. These new titles, along with the *Savage Sword* original magazine and the *Conan Saga* reprint magazine, may help launch Marvel's savage swordsman into a new age of popularity.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill



FANTASTIC FOUR #392

THE MONUMENTAL CONCLUSION TO "NO ONE GETS OUT ALIVE" FEATURES THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE ALL-NEW FANTASTIC FORCE, NOT TO MENTION THE FF'S FINAL FIGHT WITH THEIR MYSTERIOUS FOE, THE DARK RAIDER--AND JUST WAIT TILL YOU SEE WHO HE IS! BY TOM DEFALCO, PAUL RYAN AND DANNY BULANADI!

PRESS POSTERS

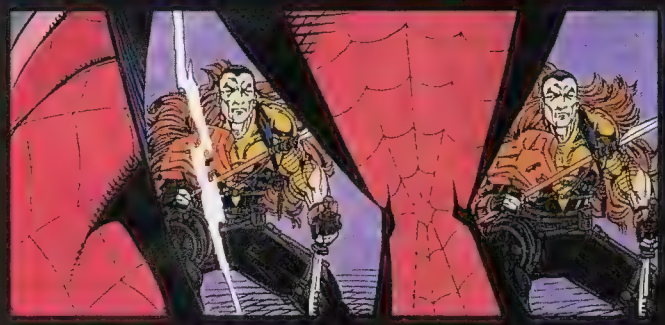
FOUR OF MARVEL'S GREATEST HEROES ARE ABOUT TO HIT THE WALL! DON'T MISS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF BROTHERS HILDEBRANDT POSTERS-THIS ONE FEATURES A FULLY PAINTED X-MEN 2099! THE SILVER SABLE BY STEVEN BUTLER AND GREGORY WRIGHT IS KILLER! LOU HARRISON HITS THE NAIL ON THE HEAD WITH HIS FULLY PAINTED THOR CORPS! AND WHEN FANS SEE WHAT DARICK ROBERTSON AND MARK FARMER HAVE DONE TO ROGUE, WELL IT'S ONE MUTANT POSTER THAT'S GONNA FLY!

MARVELVISION

AN INSIDE LOOK AT JULY'S HOTTEST TITLES!!

DAREDEVIL #332

"TREE OF KNOWLEDGE" CONCLUDES AS DAREDEVIL AND CAPTAIN AMERICA RETURN TO THE ROOTS OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE AND FACE ITS MOST MENACING VILLAINS--HYDRA AND BARON STRUCKER! IT'S A BATTLE SO DEADLY, THERE MAY NOT BE ANY ONE LEFT TO DEFEND NEW YORK FROM SYSTEM CRASH!



SPIDER-MAN #50

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE! TO STALK THE SPIDER! THE SON OF SPIDER-MAN'S DECEASED NOTORIOUS ENEMY, KRAVEN, ARRIVES TO REDEEM HIS FATHER'S HONOR BY KILLING SPIDER-MAN! PLUS, IN WHAT CONTINUES TO BE THE MOST SHOCKING STORYLINE OF THE YEAR--THE RETURNED-FROM-THE-DEAD CLONE OF PETER PARKER CONTINUES TO INVADE SPIDEY'S LIFE. HOW? WHY?! 2-CHANNEL HOLO-GRAFIX FOIL COVER! 48 PAGES!

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TOYING around • around • around • aroun

WITH SEAN AUNE

STATUESQUE DOINGS

Hello and welcome to my second installment of Toying Around. Now that we've got all the Toy Fair reporting out of the way, let's move into other areas of the collectible market.

Statues, resin kits, and models are beginning to become the hot new collectible. With the success of Sandman, Death, Batman, Lobo, Spider-Man, Wolverine, Captain America, and Silver Surfer statues from various manufacturers, other companies were sure to jump on this trend. Now Image Comics is entering the arena.

SAVAGE DRAGON ™ & © ERIK LARSEN. PHOTO: PAUL MOORE.

The Savage Dragon, sculpted by Clayburn Moore, will soon be available everywhere.

Image's first foray into this area will be a Savage Dragon statue based on Erik Larsen's superhero. This fully painted model, due out in July at a price of $150, was sculpted by Clayburn Moore in close association with Larsen. Moore, who lives in Texas, says, "I'm real proud of the piece. Both Erik and I really wanted it to look like his character, only in three dimensions." And he certainly succeeded.

This is not Moore's first venture into the world of comic book statues. He was discovered by Randy Bowen, a renowned sculptor and special products developer for Dark Horse Comics, at the 1991 San Diego Comic Con art show and has done many statues since. Moore collaborated on notable statues like Graphitti Designs's Death, the second Wolverine model from Horizon, Vampirella for Graphitti, Flash Gordon for Screamin' Products, and the upcoming Gambit statue for Marvel. A recent solo effort was J.J. Sachs (of Epic's *Sachs & Violens* mini-series), produced for Peter David and George Pérez by Bowen Designs.

The 36-year-old Moore had some rather impressive training. He attended the Kansas City Art Institute for two years, graduated from the University of Texas with an emphasis on sculpture, and trained for two years in classical methods at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. He also spent some time in Hollywood, sculpting spiders for special effects shots in the film *Arachnophobia*. While on the West Coast, he also created four-foot-tall gargoyles for Los Angeles's Brea Mall.

Moore, who grew up on Jack Kirby-drawn issues of *Fantastic Four*, says that he loves sculpting heroic, dramatic figures. "I came from a classical background with the human figure, both male and female. After having [sculpted] J.J. Sachs and Vampirella, I'd love the opportunity to sculpt more female statues. I also like to sculpt any sort of animals that are dynamic or heroic or even challenging."

THE SANDMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

This Sandman statue, designed by Randy Bowen, will be released in November.

He has now completed or is working on statues of Grifter from Jim Lee's *WildC.A.T.s* and Dart from Larsen's *Freak Force* (for a possible Christmas release). He has just begun working on statues and resin kits based on Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melnibone*.

"I'm having a lot of fun," Moore says. "It's so nice to be working in a field that you've always been interested in and to also be doing something for a living that you really enjoy doing. I'm very lucky in that sense."

To order the Savage Dragon sculpture, see your local retailer or send check or money order (U.S. funds only) to Savage Dragon Sculpture, P.O. Box 202137, Austin, Texas 78720. The cost is $150 plus a $6.95 shipping and handling fee and, for Texas residents only, a six-and-a-quarter-percent surcharge. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery.

Speaking of statues, DC is releasing a "Distant Mirrors" Sandman statue in November. Designed by Randy Bowen, it's based on the P. Craig Russell rendition of Morpheus from *Sandman* #50. The statue is accented by a sphere of genuine Austrian crystal. It retails for $135. Contact your retailer for ordering information.

I have a prime example for you this month of how rapidly a toy line can change. At February's Toy Fair, Playmates announced all their toy lines and what each one would contain. Now that the first list of product cancellations have come out, it appears that something from every line was canceled. Most noteworthy among the canceled items are *Star Trek* toys, including the Ferengi Marauder, Cardassian Warship, Phaser Rifle, and the light-and-sound-equipped Classic *Enterprise*.

We should also point out that depictions of figures on the back of a package don't nec-

THE X-MEN AND ALL PROMINENT RELATED CHARACTERS ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

The 10-inch gold metallic paint versions of Cyclops II, Sabretooth II, and Wolverine II.

The X-Men Projectors. From left to right: Apocalypse II, Wolverine II, Magneto II, Sabretooth II, and Cyclops II.

essarily mean that the figures have been or will ever be released. A good recent example is pictures of the Colonial Marines Vasquez, Hudson, and O'Mally on the back of the current Aliens packaging. As it turns out, the three figures were dropped from Kenner's line. It's not known why, but don't expect to see them anytime soon.

People often ask me about the release dates for Toy Biz's X-Men and Spider-Man toys. Here's what you should look for and when:

MAY:

Last year's 10-inch Cyclops, Wolverine, and Sabretooth figures, repainted with metallic gold paint.

Four sets of Steel Mutants: Stryfe vs. Cable, Magneto vs. Professor X, Bishop vs. Gambit, and Cyclops vs. Mr. Sinister.

X-Men Projector figures. These new toys are action figures and slide projectors in one. Each comes with three different slide wheels that when inserted into the figure depict images from the Fox cartoon show.

JUNE:

Four X-Men Pocket Comics: Weapon X Lab, Sentinel Headquarters, Cerebro Room, and War Room.

JULY:

The notable figures among this month's copious releases: Sunspot, Mojo, Pyro, Cable IV, Beast, Trevor Fitzroy, Silver Samurai, Morph, Random, Robot Wolverine. Also: the Blackbird Jet.

The first items from the new Spider-Man series, probably including Carnage, Venom with chomping jaws, and Hobgoblin.

Ten-inch figures of Venom, Spider-Man with web-hanging action, and the Hobgoblin. The first vehicle in the line: the Hobgoblin Wing Bomber.

AUGUST:

Ten-inch versions of Apocalypse II, Weapon X, Beast, Shatterstar II, Cable, and Kane II.

Web of Steel assortments, which are similar to the Steel Mutants from the X-Men line, including Spider-Man vs. Carnage, Spider-Man vs. Venom, Spider-Man vs. Hobgoblin, and Spider-Man vs. Dr. Octopus.

SEPTEMBER:

A Rogue figure—after years of letter writing, phone calls, and telegrams to Toy Biz. No word has been given on how heavily she'll be distributed, but be on the lookout for her. This is sure to be a much sought-after figure by collectors and fans of the comic book and cartoon show alike.

Other X-figures: Ch'od, Kylun, Civilian Wolverine, Black Tom, Warpath II, Senyaka, Bonebreaker, Raza, X-Treme, Comcast, Killspree, Slayback, and Cable V.

SPIDER-MAN AND VENOM ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Web of Steel die-cast versions of Venom with chomping jaws and Spidey.

Spider-Man releases, including the Lizard, the Vulture, Peter Parker, and Kingpin.

Ten-inch versions of Lizard, Spider-Man with Wall Hanging Action, and Dr. Octopus II. Also: the Tri-Spider Smasher vehicle and Smythe's Battle Chair Attack vehicle.

OCTOBER:

Ten-inch versions of Magneto, Wolverine V, and Omega Red—the only X-Men releases slated for October.

A new assortment of Spider-Man figures. The characters from this line have not yet been announced. This month this line will also be adding Projectors and dress-up kits of Spidey and Venom.

Those are all the planned X-Men and Spidey releases up through the end of the year. Of course, all dates are subject to change, and there's always a chance that more items will be added later on in the year.

So closes another installment of Toying Around. I hope to see you all back here next month. And don't forget to send in those questions and comments!

HEY, LOOK AT WHAT WE GOT!

A special tip of the *Wizard* cap to Scott A. Elliott (address withheld by request) for creating what no red-blooded American boy or girl should go without: the Tonya Harding action figure with action billy club! For his hard work and pride, we're sending Scott an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, a *Newmen* #1 signed by Jeff Matsuda, and a *Prime* #1 CD-ROMIX! Nice job, Scott!

TONYA HARDING ™ & © HER MOTHER

THE SON of HOMEMADE HEROES

Back in Wizard #31, we challenged our readers to come up with the coolest landscape settings using action figures and props. After sifting through all the entries, here're the best of the best!

GRAND PRIZE winner

SANDMAN & SPIDER-MAN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

SANDMAN VS. SPIDER-MAN

By Armando Feo Jr. of Miami, Fla.

This was selected for both its craftsmanship and ingenuity. It's evident that a lot of work went into Sandy, and the effect is terrific. For his good work, Armando wins the grand prize, a Super Nintendo game system with *X-Men*, *Captain America and the Avengers*, *Batman Returns*, and *RoboCop vs. Terminator* video game cartridges. Way to go, Armando!

SECOND PRIZE winner

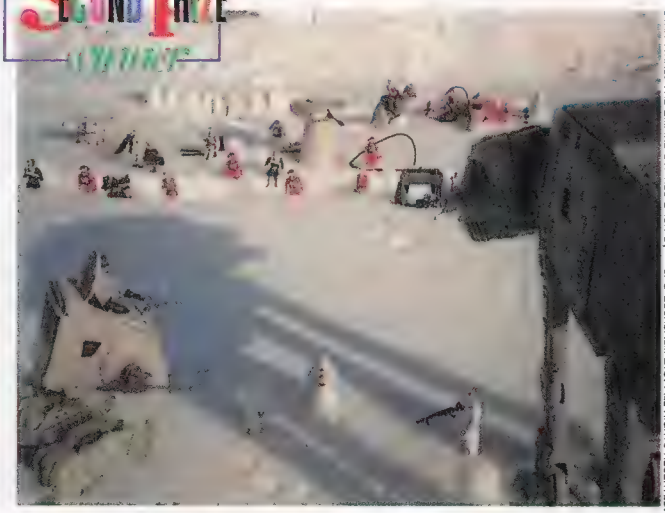
THE X-MEN ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

THE NEW X-MEN

By Gary Goodin of Meridian, Miss.

This classic scene from *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 is practically perfect when translated with these action figures. Notice the repainted Banshee, modified Prof. X figure, and homemade Sunfire made from a Batman Returns Bruce Wayne figure.

SECOND PRIZE winner



STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK ®, ™ & © LUCASFILM LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

By Joe Oglesby of Dubuque, Iowa.

The camera angle alone gives this scene, taken from the film *The Empire Strikes Back*, an ominous tone. As in the movie, this battle takes place in the morning hours!

Aliens ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.

In Space, No One Can Hear You Scream

By Gary Spence of Livonia, Mich.

Is this gross enough for you or what? Gory or not, it sure looks cool as hell. (Notice the jaws of the Alien Queen go straight through the marine's head! Ouch!)

Second Prize winner

Galactus, Thanos, Jack of Hearts, Captain Mar-Vell, Nova & Death ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Cosmic Powers

By Billy Hadder of Manassas Park, Va.

How neat do all these cosmic characters look standing around one another? Galactus (made from a giant-size Magneto), Thanos (made from a Super Powers Darkseid. Kinda appropriate, eh?), Jack of Hearts (made from the legs and arms of a Super Powers Martian Manhunter, the torso of a Super Powers Parademon, and the head of Toy Biz's Archangel), Captain Mar-Vell (a Super Powers Green Lantern), Nova (a Toy Biz Flash), and Death (so many figures that he couldn't list 'em all!).

Third Prize winner

Dr. Strange ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Sorcerer Supreme

By Jason Dooley of Richmond, Texas.

We have no idea what Dr. Strange was made from (he kinda looks like a PVC figure, but we can't be 100 percent sure), but the sheer mood emitted by this scene was enough for us to print it for all to see. This tableau is very appropriate for Marvel's master of the mystic arts.

And Hey,

we didn't forget about the other five Son of Homemade Heroes winners. A hearty congratulations to all!

Derek Handy of Dryden, Mich.
Ryan Mojica of Crown Point, Ind.
Denise Petet of Topeka, Kan.
David Silva of Lindsay, Calif.
Mike Rose and **James Garvey** of East Northport, N.Y.

Apples, Blueberries, Cherries, etc.

If any of you folks out there want to send in some figure landscapes, then by all means do it! If we get some cool entries in, we'll start showing 'em from time to time. Heck, if we get enough, we'll make this Son of Homemade Heroes a regular section in *Wizard*! It's all up to you, though; if you don't make 'em, we can't run 'em.

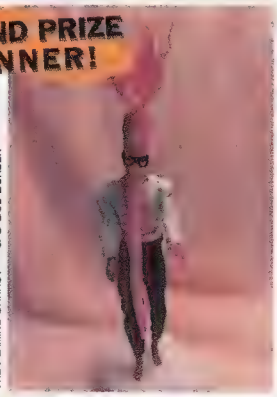
HOMEMADE HEROES

The four third place winners this month receive an *Uncanny X-Men* #308 signed by Dan Green, a *Superman: The Man of Steel* #30 (collector's edition) signed by Louise Simonson, and a *Supreme* #1 signed by Brian Murray. The two second place winners receive an *Amazing Spider-Man* #388 signed by Randy Emberlin, an *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada, a *WildStar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway and Al Gordon, and a Horizon Spider-Man model kit. The grand prize winner receives a Hot Wheels Spawnmobile signed by Todd McFarlane, an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert and Matt Ryan, a *Gambit* #1 signed by Howard Mackie and Lee Weeks, a *Spawn/Batman* signed by Frank Miller, and a Horizon Green Goblin model kit. If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send entries to: Figure of the Month Contest, c/o Toying Around, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. (No Polaroids—and make sure you focus, dammit!)

HORIZON

Special thanks to Horizon for donating the model kits. You guys are nifty-galifty!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER!



THE FLAMING CARROT ™ & © BOB BURDEN

"Owww! Owwww! Lorena Bobbitt chopped my carrot!"

The Flaming Carrot, by Eric Zadlmer of Stony Brook, N.Y., was made with a Ken doll, a real carrot, and a lot of hard work. Congrats!

CONCRETE ™ & © PAUL CHADWICK

SECOND PRIZE WINNER!

"Man, do I need Chapstick or what?"

This awesome Concrete would make his creator, Paul Chadwick, proud. Crafted by Barbara Lorraine Bryant of Bessemer, Ala., it was made from *tons* of plaster of Paris.

ELECTRO ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

THIRD PRIZE WINNER!

"Ooo...I gotta lay off that Mexican food."

Electro was created from a Secret Wars Spidey body and a Secret Wars Cap head, by Billy Nadder of Manassas Park, Va.

RIPCLAW ™ & © TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

SECOND PRIZE WINNER!

"Scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

Adam Hunt of Waipahu, Hawaii, made Ripclaw from a Toy Biz Gideon figure (his ponytail was relocated). His claws are made from real steel.

SUPERPATRIOT ™ & © ERIK LARSEN

THIRD PRIZE WINNER!

"So you don't believe I'm a superhero, eh? Well, then, how do you explain this star on my crotch?"

Superpatriot was made from a combination of a Toy Biz Spidey and Toy Biz Gideon, by Michael Walstrom of Ames, Iowa.

ERADICATOR ™ & © DC COMICS

THIRD PRIZE WINNER!

"Stand fast, villain, for now you face...the Roy Orbison Superman!"

The Eradicator was made by Joey Gagliardi of Bell Canyon, Calif. He made it from a Toy Biz Magneto II body and a Toy Biz Punisher head.

X-O WOMANOWAR ™ & © VOYAGER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

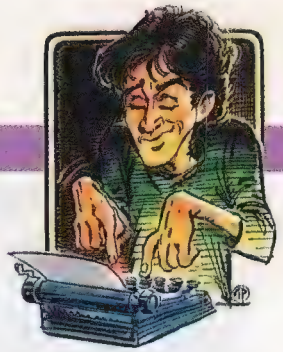
THIRD PRIZE WINNER!

"Geez, when you let one loose in one of these X-O suits, they really stick around. Whoof!"

Can you believe X-O She-Devil-of-War used to be a Storm figure? She was made by Chris Spasoff of Tempe, Ariz.

JUST RELEASED
VALIANT
FILES
SECRETS FROM THE HARBINGER FOUNDATION
This exciting New Trading Card Set from Pyramid™ & Valiant features:
• Virtually all-new art
• 120 cards plus 18 insert cards
• Plastic box doubles as a file cabinet
• 2 insert sets featuring Light F/X™ technology and foil stamping
• 2 interlocking LE cards
• Look for special Fold Cards & Harbinger Athlete cards
VALIANT
FILES
SECRETS FROM THE HARBINGER FOUNDATION
TM

PALMER'S PICKS



Wandering Star

In one short year, Teri S. Wood has managed to publish six issues of one of the most talked-about comics in recent times: *Wandering Star*. Most of the attention is due to the simple fact that Wood virtually came out of nowhere with a thoroughly entertaining comic printed on a strict bimonthly schedule.

Wandering Star first appeared as a small press comic back in 1988. Wood published two issues before she was asked to draw *The Cartoonist*, a one-page strip in the back of *Amazing Heroes*. This position eventually got her a job illustrating *Rhudiprrt, Prince of Fur*, a comic written by Dwight R. Decker and published by Mu Press. It chronicled the adventures of Rhudiprrt, a cat prince on a planet of cats whose body is taken over by the spirit of human male.

After drawing five issues of *Rhudiprrt*, Wood decided to shop some ideas around to different publishers. She contacted various companies over the course of two years, but nobody was willing to commit to a regular book, so Wood decided to self-publish her work.

In May 1993, the first issue of *Wandering Star* appeared from Pen & Ink Comics, Wood's own company. Aside from being her first attempt at self-publishing, *Wandering Star* also marked Wood's debut as the writer of a regular comic series. For a "rookie," Wood has made an impressive showing, weaving a relatively intricate narrative in the short span of a few comic books.

Wandering Star is a science fiction story that centers around Casandra Andrews, the daughter of the president of the Earth. Through a series of flashbacks, an older Casandra relates the story of the crew of the ship *Wandering Star*.

The tale begins on an Earth which has suffered serious environmental damage thanks to humanity's carelessness. In 2149, a peaceful alien Alliance approaches the Earth and persuades humanity to protect it from the Bono Diro in exchange for environmental aid and membership in the Alliance. However, Earthlings are looked down upon by galactic society because of their reputation as careless warmongers. It is in this climate of prejudice that a young Casandra finds herself a student at the Galactic Academy, where she meets the crew of the *Wandering Star* and becomes one of the few to survive the first attack against Earth in the Bono Kirian War of 2193.

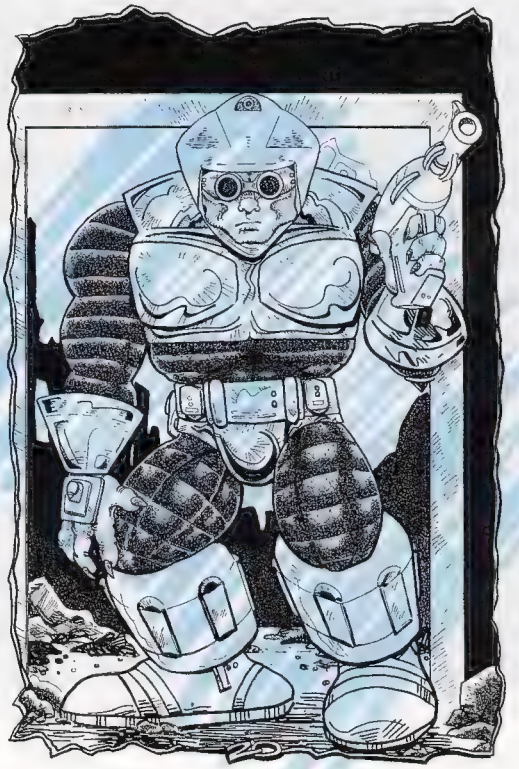
Wood's characters are written with precision and depth, and are both believable and substantial.

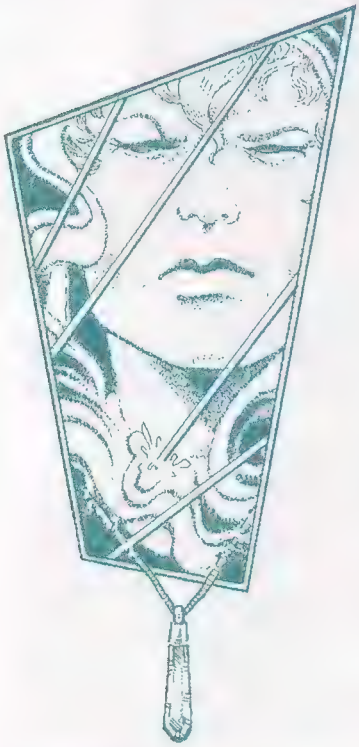
Wood uses her writing talents to balance the narratives of the young and old Casandra, which alternately run through the series. She uses the first three issues to set the story, a device that makes the onset of the war in the fourth issue even more dramatic. Her characters are written with precision and depth, and are both believable and substantial. Her art is fluid, and she draws her characters with realistic features and expressions. Wood also expertly uses pointillism to layer her black-and-white drawings with gray shades.

The covers of *Wandering Star* have caused a bit of controversy because of their unconventional nature: they feature the book's logo against a background of stars. Wood uses this layout to attract attention to her comic; among all the gaudy gimmick covers on the racks, her simple design stands out.

Wandering Star's back covers also stand out. Wood has vowed to feature photos of and information about missing children from across the country (provided by the Missing Children HELP Center) on the back of every comic published by Pen & Ink. These back covers have met with a favorable response, although unfortunately, none of the children pictured have been found yet.

Wood has used a few "tricks" to get news about her work passed around to different people, including retailers. She sent copies of the first issue of *Wandering Star* to





comic stores in an effort to get her book noticed. She also sent out 500 limited edition postcards to readers who asked their retailer to order a copy of *Wandering Star*. Recently, she offered copies of the original small press version of *Wandering Star* to readers who buy classified ads in *Comics Buyer's Guide* saying that they read and enjoy Wood's comic. All of these ideas are simple and fresh plans which generate publicity without insulting the readers' intelligence.

For a new self-publisher, Wood has made some very ambitious plans for the near future. She's announced a schedule for the remaining books of *Wandering Star*, which will continue to appear throughout 1994 and part of 1995. But that's not all: after a short break following the conclusion of *Wandering Star*, Wood will start a new comic series, *Darklight*, a fantasy/horror story that will run for 25 issues.

Wood hopes to increase the frequency of her comics to a monthly basis sometime during *Darklight*'s run. Currently, she works in a deli to support her self-published work, so she can only handle a book every two months. If you as a comic book reader have any compassion in your soul, and an interest in quality literature, start buying *Wandering Star* to help Teri Wood quit her day job and work on comics full time!

As usual, I'm willing to read your letters on just about anything, and hopefully I'll be able to answer any questions that you have, so drop me a line at: Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. ☆

PICK OF THE MONTH

Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre: Batton Lash has just kicked off a bimonthly comic about two lawyers who handle supernatural cases. Each issue features a self-contained story, and the premiere issue contains an introduction for readers new to the characters.

Tom Palmer Jr. is a New Jersey-based writer who will hopefully get to hang out with Matt, Brian, Dan, and Todd this summer.

Tom's Recommended Reading

Wandering Star: Currently, six issues of this 12-issue series have been published. (The seventh should be out in May.) Issues #1 and #3 are already in their second printings. Wood plans to keep all of the issues available until a paperback collection is printed. Individual issues cost $2 each, and a subscription to all 12 books costs $24. To help defray printing costs, Wood has also published a limited-edition print (only 500 copies) for $10. All of these can be ordered from: Pen & Ink Comics, P.O. Box 549, El Centro, CA 92244-0549.

Darklight: After the projected conclusion of *Wandering Star* in March 1995, Wood will begin publishing her next series. This comic will premiere in July 1995 and run for 25 issues, probably on a monthly schedule. It would probably be a good idea to wait until Wood finishes *Wandering Star* before placing any orders for this comic.

Rhudiprrt, Prince of Fur: Wood drew five issues of this comic, which was written by Dwight R. Decker and published by Mu Press. There might still be copies available from the publisher, so drop a note to Mu Press at 4731 Roosevelt Way N.E., Seattle, WA 98105.

That just about covers all of Teri Wood's work, except for the small press version of *Wandering Star* and *The Cartoonist* strip, which ran in *Amazing Heroes*. The following titles are current comics which deserve some attention.

Acme Novelty Library: Chris Ware has a unique style which recalls classic comic strips and animation, but his stories deal with themes of modern angst and hopelessness. The first issue focused on Jimmy Corrigan, the "Smartest Kid in the World," and featured beautiful, highly detailed, full-color art in a small format. The second issue deals with the adventures of Quimby the Mouse in a series of tabloid-sized black-and-white strips.

The Manly World of Lloyd Llewellyn: This hefty hardcover, limited to 2,000 copies, collects every single story featuring Lloyd Llewellyn, from his debut in a preview in *Love & Rockets* to recent strips printed in *Eightball*. There is also a section devoted to sketches and other miscellaneous items. Each copy is signed by creator Dan Clowes, and there are no plans to reprint this material for a long time.

WANDERING STAR™ & © TERI S. WOOD

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

It's time to test all that terribly unimpressive comic book knowledge you've accumulated from spending hour after hour reading comics when you should've been out playin' the slots. What follows are 25 of the hardest questions ever slapped together by a band of gamey fanboys. We've also included the Fanboy-O-Meter, which you can use to gauge how macho (or macha) you are.

This month, we're grading your comic knowledge against the worst things you could find at the bottom of a glass of milk when you're about 70 percent done.

score	rank
0-5	Gum
6-12	Phyllis Diller's teeth
13-19	Squished cockroach with one leg still twitching
20-24	Matted hair with clump of scalp attached
25	Small, wallet-sized photo of Whoopi Goldberg naked (yechh!)

1. Who among the following characters doesn't know that Bruce Wayne is Batman?
A) Bane
B) Ra's al Ghul
C) Talia
D) Poison Ivy

2. Wolverine once wore the costume of which now-deceased Imperial Guard member?
A) Smasher
B) Fang
C) Manta
D) Hussar

3. Who put out Deathstroke's left eye?
A) The Ravager
B) The H.I.V.E.
C) His ex-wife
D) Moe (Deathstroke wasn't quite as fast as Curly with that eyepoke block)

4. Which of these characters was never a member of the Avengers?
A) Spider-Man
B) Mr. Fantastic
C) Swordsman
D) Nova

5. Who on the following list has never been cloned?
A) Spider-Man
B) Jean Grey
C) Captain America
D) Mystique

6. What were the nanite-powered assassins sent out after Bloodshot called?
A) Buckshots
B) Snapshots
C) Speedshots
D) The Men from M.U.R.R.A.Y.

7. Which of the following characters helped train Wolverine in the ninja arts?
A) Ogun
B) Shingen Yashida
C) Yukio
D) Toyo Harada

8. Who was Captain America's partner right after the death of Bucky Barnes?
A) The Falcon
B) Rick Jones
C) The Black Widow
D) It was still Bucky; Cap just carried around his rotting corpse

9. What was the name of the metallurgist who created Captain America's shield?
A) Dr. Myron MacLain
B) Dr. H.G. Wells
C) Dr. Nemo
D) Dr. Abraham Von Strucker

10. What's Conan's homeland called?
A) Hyboria
B) Aquilonia
C) Cimmeria
D) Poughkeepsie

11. What was Concrete's former occupation?
A) Speechwriter
B) Botanist
C) Gravedigger
D) Construction worker

12. In DC's *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, who killed the Monitor?
A) The Anti-Monitor
B) Brainiac
C) Harbinger
D) He had a heart attack and died when he saw what a mess DC continuity was (and how much worse it was gonna get)

13. What was the former name of the Xavier Institute for Higher Learning?
A) The Xavier School for Better Learning
B) The Xavier School for Gifted Youngsters
C) The Xavier School for Genetic Enhancements
D) Professor Xavier's All-You-Can-Eat Morlock Steak House

14. What's the name of the Kingpin's wife?
A) Marilyn
B) Vanessa
C) Christy
D) Dave

15. What was Matt Murdock's father?
A) A shepherd
B) A setter
C) A boxer
D) A retriever

16. By what name is Chris Powell better known?
A) Bantam
B) Speedball
C) Darkhawk
D) Convict 211-GTF

17. What was the occupation of the original Deathlok, Luther Manning?
A) Tinker
B) Tailor
C) Soldier
D) Spy

18. Whose origin was indirectly caused by the cable car that went out of control when the Strangers received their powers?
A) Sludge
B) The Night Man
C) Solitaire
D) Warstrike

19. Which of the following characters was not a charter member of the New Defenders?
A) The Beast
B) The Angel
C) Gargoyle
D) Cloud

20. Which Batvillain died during "Knightfall"?
A) The Film Freak
B) Killer Croc
C) Firefly
D) Cat-Man

21. Who on the following list was a Lord of Order?
A) Barter
B) Dr. Occult
C) Dove II
D) Mr. E

22. How many personalities exhibited by Crazy Jane of the Doom Patrol have been catalogued?
A) 27
B) 52
C) 64
D) Hut-hut, *hike*! (Yeah, that was a pretty weak joke, but we went for it anyway.)

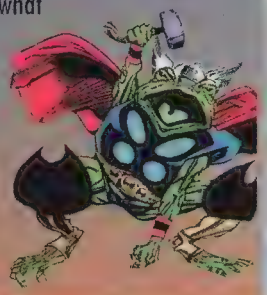
23. Which of these characters started on the road to superheroing when he/she crashed his/her car while driving under the influence of alcohol?
A) Dr. Strange
B) Iron Man
C) She-Hulk
D) Moon Knight

24. Which team was headquartered in a lighthouse?
A) W.H.O.
B) The Champions
C) Power Pack
D) Excalibur

25. Who *first* replaced the Thing from the FF?
A) Crystal
B) She-Hulk
C) Luke Cage
D) Sammy Hagar, but it didn't work out. That's OK, though, 'cause he found work by replacing David Lee Roth in Van Halen, and he's doing a pretty good job, so everything worked out rather nicely. Can't say the same for Luke Cage, though. He sucks. ☆

stupid but TRUE...

This is a little different from the usual Stupid but Trues we run. This is both stupid and true, but it's also...awesome. At the beginning of a four-issue story arc (*Thor* #363-#366), Loki transforms Thor into a bullfrog. The plot features Thor's subsequent battles with evil rats and alligators, his befriending the frogs of Central Park, and what happens when he lifts his enchanted hammer while in his teeny amphibian form. It all adds up to one of the most enjoyable Frog of Thun...uh, God of Thunder stories ever told. Hats off to writer/artist Walt Simonson for pulling this one off.



The Mighty Fro...; I Mean The Mighty Thor ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

A	N	S	W	E	R	S
1) D	2) B	3) C	4) D	5) D	6) C	7) A
10) C	11) A	12) C	13) B	14) B	15) C	16) C
19) D	20) A	21) C	22) C	23) A	24) D	25) C

S	R	E	W	S	N	A
9) A	8) B	7) A	6) C	5) D	4) D	3) C
18) B	17) C	16) C	15) C	14) B	13) B	12) C
		25) C	24) D	23) A	22) C	21) C

THE CARNAGE BEGINS

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the WIZARD OF CARDS

By Stephen Shamus

Fleer Flair Flamin' Hot!!

Fleer Flair Marvel is coming! This could be the biggest event in non-sports cards since Impel (now SkyBox) released Marvel Universe series 1in1990. These 150 cards, which chronicle the history of Marvel superheroes, might be the best non-sports cards of all time. The $4-a-pack price tag, with 10 cards to a pack, is also the heftiest of all time—one that only Marvel could get away with. Look for it in June. There's only one chase set in this series, an 18-card set utilizing Fleer's metallized foil. The front is all foil, with the art superimposed over it. These are found once every other pack, so you should get 12 such cards in a box.

The Simpsons series 1 cards were an instant sellout, and rather than go back to press, SkyBox has scheduled a second Simpsons series for August release. The first series only contained characters from Bongo comic books, but the second will feature characters from the TV show. The chase cards will include 10 odor-emitting Smell-O-Rama cards, packed at an undetermined ratio; nine Wiggle cards, returning from series 1 and found once every three packs, all of which bear part of an Itchy & Scratchy puzzle on the back; four Disappearing Ink cards, parts of which are drawn in ink that disappears when exposed to body heat, found one to every 36 packs; and four Master Series art cards, each one featuring a special interpretation of a Simpsons character and a special foil border treatment, with one card in 180 packs. From May until August, SkyBox will insert exclusive Simpsons cards in Bongo comics, including a decoder that's needed to interpret the codes found on the backs of series 2 cards. More information will be available next month.

Trekkies are in love with SkyBox, which keeps giving them more things to cheer about. The second Master series of *Star Trek* trading cards is due out in July. This 100 card set features original paintings and computer-generated art. Production is limited to 10,000 numbered cases. Three randomly inserted cards, each of which depicts one of the *Star Trek* crews, fit together to form a special triptych. The *Next Generation* crew is done by Boris Vallejo, the Deep Space Nine crew by Julie Bell, and the original crew by Joe Jusko. The Master series cards have a suggested retail price of $1.49 per pack with six cards in a pack, which will be the standard for all Master series in 1994.

Malibu has built up quite a following with its Ultraverse titles. In August, it'll become the third publisher to get a Master series, after Marvel and DC. The Ultraverse Master series, which comes on the heels of two regular-issue sets from SkyBox, contains 90 cards fully painted by Dave Dorman. Dorman even did all the chase cards: two holithograms, or images placed on top of a holographic background, which come once per box; and five Ultrafoils, packed two per box, which will depict as-yet undetermined characters the way they'll look in March 1995 Ultraverse comic books. SkyBox is also giving away original art through a redemption program. One copy of each of the 90 cards bears a special seal of authenticity. If you send the card to the address on its back, SkyBox will send you the art on which it was based.

Gamers beware: *Mortal Kombat* cards are on the way. Classic Games, makers of the "Deathwatch 2000" cards, are back again with a 100-card release based on America's top arcade game. These cards have already been out for a little while; they were solicited and shipped in a matter of weeks. This set gives gamers tips on all the fighters and strategies for beating them. Two inserts help players defeat Goro and Shang Tsung, the ultimate Kombatants, and five inserts give tips on how to win the tournament in *Mortal Kombat II*. These cards aren't officially part of the 100-card set but appear as often as the regular ones. The packs are also sweetened by a sweepstakes through which you can win a free *Mortal Kombat II* arcade game. The suggested retail price is around $1.00 for 10 cards.

Jim Lee's Wildstorm chromium set will head your way in June. Artists who have participated include Jim Lee, Sam Kieth, Dale Keown, Jae Lee, Bart Sears, and more. Gen[13], WildC.A.T.s, StormWatch, and other Wildstorm characters are set to appear. Every card back features rankings that can be used for a game (rules are included in every pack). Packs contain six cards and have a suggested retail of approximately $3.00 each. Only 4,000 cases are being produced, with special refractive foil versions, marked by a rainbow effect, randomly inserted in packs at ratios not yet determined.

This page and next: six previews of Fleer Flair Marvel. Cap and Thor are from the 18-card Power Blast subset.

"Take this, you villai...hey, my fists are bigger than my head!"

"You have to say uno when you're down to one card! Take this, cheater!"

Tie a yellow ribbon 'round the old Jean Grey.

There's plenty of fantasy art card sets due out this June. Comic Images is releasing Conan series 2, which features cover art from Marvel's *Savage Sword of Conan* magazine done chromium-style. Boris Vallejo, Bill Sienkiewicz, and others will be represented. Seven-card packs have a suggested retail of about $1.00-$1.50 per pack. Randomly inserted are six prism cards, a three-card rainbow-foil-embossed set that comes one per 12-box case, a gold-foil medallion card that comes two per case, and an uncut five-by-seven-inch press sheet of cards from the set packed once a box. Lastly, an uncut sheet of six cards from the set comes packed one per case.

Comic Images will also release a new 90-card Jim Warren collection. This too is a sequel, entitled Jim Warren 2: More Beyond Bizarre. This surreal fantasy artist's set has many of the same features as the Conan set. Six prism cards are randomly inserted, as are foiled medallion cards and uncut sheets. Evil Eyes, a three-card subset depicting a woman with an unusual set of eyes, comes packed one per case. Here's the real bonus: there are 500 randomly inserted autographed cards by Jim Warren bearing a notice of authenticity on the back. These 10-card packs have a suggested retail of about $1.00 per pack.

Friedlander is releasing The Fantastic Art of Michael Ploog. This 90-card set features all-new paintings by this former Marvel artist. There are 50 redemption cards for original Ploog artwork as well as 1,000 autographed cards and five Metallic Storm foil cards randomly inserted into packs.

New Line Cinema is planning to start its own trading card line rather than license its movies out to companies like Topps or SkyBox. The company hasn't announced any projects yet.

MArKet WAtCH

Fleer Spider-Man cards have been a huge success since the beginning. The regular foil packs have been selling through everywhere, as have both types of jumbo packs. The 11-card jumbos contain special versions of six Suspended Animation cards from the regular hobby packs; they're done with gold-foil webbed backgrounds instead of clear acetate backgrounds. The 12-card jumbos contain gold-foil versions of the other six Suspended Animation cards. All jumbo packs contain these bonus cards, which true completists will want to finish their sets.

The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers cards, based on the popular Fox TV show, came out with little hype and have done tremendously well on the market. Mighty Morphin merchandise was all the rage at Christmas and has sustained sales throughout the year. These cards were also a huge hit, especially among the difficult-to-capture younger audience. The DynaEtch foil, essentially completely foiled versions of each card, are a nice touch, but this set would've been huge chase cards or no.

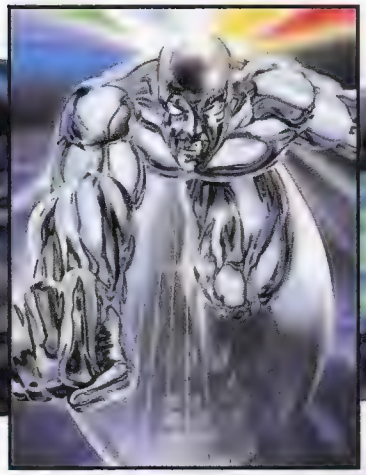
Valiant Era 2 card orders seemed to be very low across the board. Many retailers got stuck with the first series of Valiant Era cards and the Valiant Deathmate cards. Because of the low orders, however, this series has held its value, and may actually turn out to be a secondary market winner.

The Batman SkyDisc hologram cards from SkyBox's Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight set are a tough pull and are therefore now trading in the $70-$80 range. Although the cards don't look quite as cool as the oversized promo discs (of which only 10,000 were made), they're still pretty neat. Since there will be more entries in the SkyDisc subset—July's DC Master series will contain SkyDisc #2, which depicts Superman—collectors will probably maintain their interest. Subsets with ongoing numbering tend to be more desired by completists.

The biggest set so far this year has been Fleer Ultra X-Men. Collectors are having a tough time finishing sets due to packaging varieties (see the Card Price Guide for more details). They've all shipped, but it'll cost you tons of cash to complete your sets. Judging by the prices being reported to us, collectors want them—bad.

A sample of the Wiggle cards from Simpsons series 1 and 2.

™ & © Marvel



"It's true! If you use Lemon Fresh Joy, you can see yourself!"

™ & © Marvel

"Jumpin' rope is fun, but this double dutch stuff is murder!"

™ & © Marvel

"Gosh, for a guy with six big Mickey Mouse-like buttons on his costume, I'm pretty tough!"

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TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay any attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1. SPAWN

Spawn here may want to move up from Regular Strength Oxy Pads to Really Freakin' Strong Oxy Pads. Sheesh, lay off the cheese and the chocolate, pal. Regardless of his complexion (and by the way, where'd his nose go?), Spawny continues to be the most popular character around. Given the rumors about the Spawn movie and cartoon as well as the Spawn toys that should be out towards the end of the year, Todd McFarlane's little demonic creation ought to be the king of the hill here for quite some time. (Or at least until the fickle winds of fandom shift directions.)

2. SPIDER-MAN

It looks as if all the recent attention that Spidey's been receiving lately has given him a big head! He's starting to resemble Lyle Lovett there. Anyway, this summer, Aunt May's favorite nephew will be embarking upon a journey destined to test the limits of his soul, his marriage, his sanity, and the stretchy parts of his underwear. The Spidey staff has cooked up a whole slew of new problems for Peter. Gee, ya know, nothing ever seems to go right in my life anymore, Parker, and the countdown is on for the historic 400th issue of Marvel's most "amazing" hero.

3. BATMAN

Ooooo, looks like Batman's doing the "bite the head off the chipmunk" trick to intimidate some young toughs. This guy's definitely a bent unit. Anyway, Bats here (if that's the way Bats looks nowadays. Who can keep up?) is rain, high thanks to the countless movies, cartoons, toys, and other licensed crap that have come out over the last—yeesh!—half a century. The Batman III movie that's in the works can't hurt, either. Not to mention the fact that the storylines running through the 70 or so Batman books and affiliated titles really make for some of the cooler books in the market.

4. GAMBIT

The ragin' Cajun appears to be somewhat ticked off here, and we're at a loss as to why. His wildly successful miniseries finished up months ago and is still burning up the back issue charts. On top of that, it appears that his relationship with one of comics's hottest babes, Rogue, is just starting to heat up (even though she's a mutant whose powers consist of being able to steal a person's thoughts, memories, and abilities when she touches their skin. This could pose a potential stumbling block in the development of a relationship, don't you agree?). And to top it all off, he's on TV every Saturday morning! Buck up there, Gambit, it's not that bad, is it?

SPAWN IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS INC. SPIDER-MAN & GAMBIT ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. BATMAN ™ & © DC COMICS.

5. WOLVERINE

Geez Louise, you could fit Spider-Man's head sideways into this guy's mouth. Ten bucks says Wolvie here could give a hickey to Mt. Rushmore. Aside from being a dentist's nightmare (how many teeth do you think are in that maw?), Wolvie is also hands down the most popular character ever to call himself an X-Man (not that he can call himself an X-Man anymore). On top of that, he's also got his toy gig (from Toy Biz), a Saturday mornin' cartoon show, and loads of other merchandising juggernauts, all ensuring that this adamantiumless mutant will be stickin' around a while.

6. SUPERMAN

"Me ams Supesman. Me come from other planet called...uh, called...uh, other planet. Have got special powers from yellow ball in sky. Me have to use your toilet. Bad." Though Superman just got done with some nasty business involving him losing control of his powers and getting all bloated and stupid, he was always a hero in our eyes. And as if he wasn't heroic enough to begin with, he's just finishing up saving the universe in the "Worlds Collide" storyline (no, not that Punisher/Archie nonsense; the Milestone thing), beating up Doomsday (again), and saving Metropolis from that evil weenie Lex Luthor. What a guy, Cro-Magnon or not.

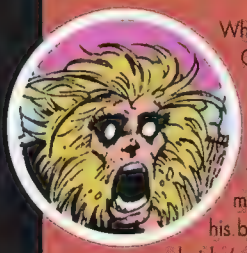
7. PRIME

Ugh. Prime here looks like Bobby Brady when he entered that all-you-can-eat ice cream game show in that old *Brady Bunch* episode. Somebody get this guy a moist towelette or something. Now that that's cleaned up, let's find out why Prime is so popular, eh? OK? OK! What those clever eggs over at Malibu did was create Prime, aka 13-year-old Kevin Green, who can grow protoplasmic superpowered bodies and kick supervillain tail. (Little does the world know that he's doing it all to impress his 13-year-old girlfriend.) This is really great stuff, and it's no wonder that aside from being one of the 10 hottest characters in this list, Prime is the top dog in Malibu's Ultraverse.

8. VIOLATOR

From the looks of this portrait, if the *Spawn* motion picture were cast today, the role of the Violator would go to *Young Frankenstein*'s Peter Boyle. (A close second would be the love child of *Barney Miller*'s Abe Vigoda and *Taxi*'s Danny De Vito.) If nothing else, the Violator's presence finally brings the villain quotient in the Top 10 Heroes & Villains back up to at least one. (What with all the cool villains like Venom and Sabretooth being good guys now, there are no more cool villains!) As long as the Violator remains a big thorn in Spawn's side (after all, Spawn's at the top of the charts!), this diminutive demon should continue to cling to his fame.

9. SABRETOOTH



Whoa! From the looks of it, somebody just used Galactus's helmet as a suppository on Sabretooth, and didn't give 'im much of an advance warning. That's gotta sting. But aside from all that, Mr. Creed isn't a very happy camper these days. He's holed up in Professor Xavier's mansion with the X-Men, who are probably his biggest enemies. We can't be entirely sure what he's doing there or what his actual agenda is because the tooth is one of those mean, tough-as-nails ex-villains with a "hidden past," which seems to be one of the prerequisites for being a hot character in these days of convoluted comics.

10. X-O MANOWAR

Awww, li'l X-O is all sweepy-peepee. He must've been readin' a copy of *Archer & Armstrong*. The reason that X-O here is still so popular with the fans is simple. He's a big, take-no-nonsense tough guy (always a big hit with the kids) clad in a suit of armor that puts even Voltron's to shame. To really stir the pot, X-O is wrapping up a huge storyline in his own title in which those butt-ugly Spider Aliens put the big kibosh on the X-O armor. Makes you realize how good it is to have friends like Solar who can help you get a new set of X-O threads. ☆

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

THE HYPNO-HUSTLER

Just when you thought we'd scraped the bottom of the feeble character barrel (and let us tell you, that's one *big* barrel!), we dredge up this absolute gem! The Hypno-Hustler used his hypnotic abilities (combined with the mesmerizing powers of his trio of backup singers, the Mercy Killers) to facilitate robberies. His career of crime was just getting under way when he decided to rob a disco he was playing. Much to his chagrin, Spider-Man was there in the guise of his alter ego, Peter Parker (resplendent in a John Travolta-ish white leisure suit). Spidey saved the day by figuring out that the Hustler's powers were based on sound; plugging his ears with webbing, he defeated this bozo (who looks like a cross between Prince, Rick James, and Sly Stone). This wing nut first appeared in *Peter Parker, The Spectacular Spider-Man* #24 in a story that went by the now-legendary name of "Spider-Man Night Fever." Ugh.

Wolverine, Sabretooth & Hypno-Hustler ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, Superman ™ & © DC Comics. Prime ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.
Violator ® Todd McFarlane Productions. X-O Manowar ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

MARCH '94
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The Ray (mini-series) #1

Artist: ***Joe Quesada***
Writer: ***Jack C. Harris***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release date: ***February 1992***

Low key, with a capital "L": that's what this book was when it debuted over two years ago. I mean, c'mon—retailers sure as hell didn't order it by the pound, and fans sure didn't line up outside comic stores waiting to pick it up; it's not as if DC killed Superman in it or anything.

Regardless of its low profile, the six-issue *Ray* mini-series was well-received (which is good, since it was an excellent story), and eventually the powers-that-be over at DC gave the go-ahead for a regular *Ray* series, which again was rather low key when it was announced.

Word of mouth did the job, though, and this series—which along with *Robin*, *Superboy*, and *Damage* rounds out the best of DC's excellent superteen books—has established a solid fan following. Fanboy fingers have begun searching for the new Ray's first appearance, which is, of course, *The Ray* (mini-series) #1.

(And just to clear up any questions you might have, the current Ray is the son of DC's Golden Age Ray.)

Value then: $7.50
Value now: $9.00

One year ago this month, the *Wizard* Comic Watch spotlighted *X-Factor* #6, the first full appearance of Apocalypse, who has very big lips.

© Marvel Entertainment Group

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The Spectre #1

Artist: ***Tom Mandrake***
Writer: ***John Ostrander***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release date: ***December 1992***

The Vertigo-like *Spectre* series from DC is truly one of the most underrated titles in the comic marketplace today. With top-notch stories by John Ostrander and fantastic artistic storytelling by Tom Mandrake, *The Spectre* is a book you should pick up if you haven't done so already. Heck, *Sandman*, a similar DC book, didn't get really popular (and its back issues didn't get megaexpensive) until around issue #20 or #21, so *The Spectre*'s almost due.

Telling the tale of DC's Astral Avenger, *The Spectre* focuses on Jim Corrigan, a somewhat dead private investigator. Corrigan happens to house the nigh-infinite powers of the Spectre, who punishes those who spill innocent blood. And when he punishes them, he *doesn't* fool around. Ouch.

This is a really excellent title. Once the masses catch wind of how good it is, expect its availability to go down and its value to go up. ☆

Value then: $3.50
Value now: $4.25

One year ago this month, the *Wizard* Comic Watch spotlighted *New Mutants* #29, the first appearance of X-Factor's Guido, aka Strong Guy.

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PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LIST OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN JUNE!

The Chaos Effect: Alpha

Artists: Bernard Chang & Jerry Ordway
Writer: Bob Layton
Release Date: June
Cover Price: FREE!!

"The Chaos Effect" is what happens when that time-portal swinger Ivar (aka Timewalker) mistakenly goes through a portal to "the end of all time." That brings the necromantic (né "Darque") energy culled from the deaths of millions along for the ride. (Nice move, ace.) Many humans will perish from the Effect, an electronic "freeze" caused by the massive amounts of Darqueness unleashed upon Earth all at once.

When asked what other goodies are contained in *Chaos: Alpha*, writer, editor, bass player, and all-around cool fella Bob Layton says, "I'm a bit hesitant to reveal too much, but I will tell you that 'The Chaos Effect' is a monumental catastrophe, and that it sets the stage for what will happen to the world and for the necromantic characters—Master Darque, Dr. Mirage, Shadowman, et al—in the Valiant Universe." When pressed a little further, Layton reveals that in *Alpha*, "we will get to see the Visitor, sort of. We will be introduced to him, but you might not immediately know who he is."

Longtime solid comics pro Jerry Ordway will be doing his first Valiant work in *Alpha*, inking both the cover (penciled by Dan Jurgens) and the interior pencils of rising star Bernard Chang. When asked about the art team for *Alpha*, Layton replies, "I think it's an incredible blend of Bernard's dynamic storytelling and characterization and the realistic approach that Jerry brings to comics. To me, it's absolutely some of the best stuff we've ever published."

Given Mr. Layton's high praise for the art, the most ridiculously low cover price we've ever seen (that would be *free!*), and the fact that this storyline promises to bring the Valiant Universe into a whole new era, *The Chaos Effect: Alpha* seems like the place to be in June!

...Magnus™ & © Western Publishing. All other characters ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

Aquaman #1

Aquaman ™ & © DC Comics

Artists: Marty Egeland & Brad Vancata
Writer: Peter David
Release Date: July 5
Cover Price: $1.50

For a change of pace, we're going to let series writer Peter David tell us all about his upcoming *Aquaman* title. Take it away, Peter!

"*Aquaman* #1 is the first issue of a three-issue story arc that culminates in a major change for Aquaman. He encounters a new villain named Charybdis, who wants to capture Aquaman in order to steal his powers. Things will build to a fairly horrific climax in issue #2, where Aquaman will lose his left hand: it gets eaten by piranhas.

"In issue #0, he will replace the remnants of his hand with a new weapon—namely, a hook. I was trying to emphasize the dichotomy that Aquaman has, namely, having loyalties to both the land and sea. My feeling is there is nothing that symbolizes the relationship between the land and sea more than a hook. It will give him a new, dynamic, visual look and a fairly formidable offensive capability."

When asked if there will be a special cover for *Aquaman* #1, Peter replies, "The cover is going to be printed on glossy paper, wrapped around the comic, and bound on the spine with staples. It's going to feature a cover price of $1.50 so that everyone who wants to read the book—and everyone will—can afford it. With *Aquaman*, you're not gonna get soaked!" Quite a card, that Peter.

Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire

Artists: Barry Kitson & James Pascoe
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Release Date: June 14
Cover Price: $4.95

After years of rumors, this long-awaited meeting of comicdom's two most infamous vigilantes is about to take place! It's the Batman (of the Jean Paul Valley/AzBats variety) and the Punisher in their first caper together, and DC and Marvel's first intercompany crossover since the X-Men/Teen Titans book way back in 1982 (when the Titans were cool and the X-Men didn't yet rule the universe).

In *Lake of Fire*, nefarious Punisher bad guy Jigsaw rears his extremely ugly head in Gotham City, and as one might expect, the Punisher is not far behind Jiggy's jaggy butt. Writer Denny O'Neil describes what occurs next: "The two run afoul of the very righteous, fire-breathing Jean Paul, who doesn't want either crook on his turf." The two heroes eventually form a tenuous partnership, but circumstances lead to a three-way tussle between AzBats, Punisher, and Jigsaw.

It turns out, though, that a clandestine baddie has been pulling strings behind the scenes. The manifestations of his evil doings will lead into the Marvel end of the crossover, *Punisher/Batman: Deadly Knights*, shipping in August, which features a Batman without Jean Paul behind the cowl.

Batman ™ & © DC Comics. The Punisher ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

Youngblood #6

Youngblood ™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.

Artists: Rob Liefeld & Danny Miki
Writer: Rob Liefeld
Release Date: June 23
Cover Price: $3.50

READER ALERT: The events that take place in *Youngblood* #6 are a continuation of those in the last 15 pages of *Team Youngblood* #9 (written and penciled by Rob Liefeld). Those two books give readers a chance to catch up with the Youngblood characters, who haven't starred in their own adventures in quite a while—not since October 1993's *Youngblood Strikefile* #4. And hey, these issues'll also give you a glimpse of some new characters too.

According to *Youngblood* writer/artist Rob Liefeld, "There's a new character by the name of Colonel Bravo introduced right on the first page of *Youngblood* #6. I think the response to this character should be very interesting...we'll see." When asked what follows the introduction of Col. Bravo, Liefeld responds, "A lot of looking into the lives of the characters, seeing how they feel about the whole celebrity, government agent, work-for-hire lives they lead. They'll be working under a new administration in the White House, and the administration wants to make a few changes in the team. It's basically a lot of catching up with Youngblood, seeing where they've been, and a look at where they're headed."

Join Rob and company for the reintroduction of the first Image title, and get ready for a new regime and a new team.

Batman: LODK #63

Artists: Barry Kitson & Scott Hanna
Writer: Denny O'Neil
Release Date: June 28
Cover Price: $1.75

This issue is the climax of the 10-part "KnightsEnd" story arc and the nearly two-year-long "Knightfall" saga.

There've been rumors galore about what will occur at the end of this storyline and who will assume the mantle of the bat. Writer Denny O'Neil says, "This is where it all culminates. I tend to think of it as a symbolic confrontation between two different kinds of heroes: Bruce Wayne and Jean Paul Valley."

Regarding the resolution of the story, he adds, "I would like to think that we have a few surprises up our sleeves regarding how this confrontation ends." O'Neil feels that fans have focused too much on who's wearing the cape and cowl and not enough on the storyline itself. "It's an instance in comics where the storyline has been about something or somethings, and I feel that we're being true to the theme of the storyline in this issue. Of course, our primary concern is entertaining the reader."

So what of the future of the Batverse? O'Neil: "This issue will really change some elements of Batman's little corner of the DC Universe, and I think it will change the long-term characterization of Bruce Wayne as well." Sounds to us like more than enough reasons to check out this ish.

Batman & Bruce Wayne ™ & © DC Comics

MORE PICKS

The following pages contain the grooviest titles shipping in June. Books marked by the *Wizard* Recommended Reading sign promise to deliver solid, well-written stories and shouldn't be overlooked on the comic racks!

Action Comics #702

DC COMICS Bloodsport returns to a Metropolis in its rebuilding stage. His mission: to keep the city "pure and clean" (if you know what he means) when it's repopulated. It's a grim and gritty Archie Bunker vs. DC's most popular ex-corpse, by Dave Michelinie (in his *Action* debut!), Jackson Guice, and Denis Rodier. **$1.50**

The Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix #4

MARVEL While tusslin' with Apocalypse, Scott and Jean track down a clue to the lethal Legacy Virus. Just when things seemed bad enough, they also confront Nathan's clone for a final showdown. Will they survive? (Well, if you look at the *X-Men* write-up on page 132, you'll know the answer.) By Scott Lobdell, Gene Ha, and Al "Oy!" Vey. **$2.95**

Amazing Spider-Man #392

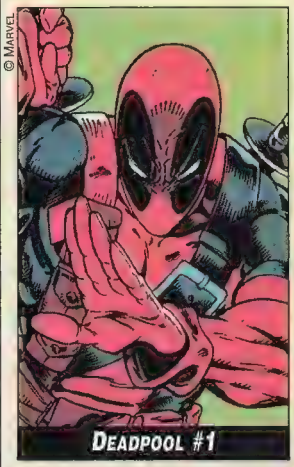
MARVEL Shriek and Carrion just won't stop beating up Spidey. Can't they leave a broken guy alone? Reacting badly to all the problems in his life (for instance, his "parents" being a couple of lame robots), Peter begins to withdraw more and more into his Spidey persona. By J.M. DeMatteis, Mark Bagley, and Randy Emberlin. **$1.50**

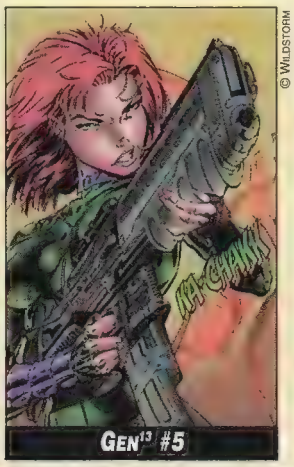
Batman #510

DC COMICS "KnightsEnd," Part 7 (of 10). As Azrael's temper tantrum against crime rages on, Bruce Wayne demands that Azzie relinquish the Batman identity. Azrael says no. (The big baby.) Can anyone say..."fight"? By Doug Moench and Mike Manley. Continued in *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #30 and *Detective Comics* #677, in which Nightwing joins the fray against Azrael. (And don't miss the climax in *LODK* #63!) **$1.50**

Conan the Adventurer #3

MARVEL Conan finds himself smack in the middle of a civil war in Brythunia. In a pretty strong attempt to gain the upper hand, one side employs a Golum. Is the Cimmerian man enough to best a Golum? I doubt it, but then again, this ain't the last issue, so something's gotta happen. By Roy Thomas and Rafael Kayanan. **$1.50**


© Marvel
Deadpool #1


© Wildstorm
Gen[13] #5

© DC Comics
Green Lantern #54

© Mike Mignola
Hellboy: Seed of Destruction #4

Deadpool #1

MARVEL Well, whattaya know? That mercenary with a big mouth returns in his second four-issue mini-series. We can't say much about it, but this kickoff issue has CopyCat and Weapon X. By Mark Waid and Ian Churchill. **$2.50**

Gen[13] #5

IMAGE In the final issue of this mini-series, the team is caught in the crossfire between the Keepers and the Black Razors as they battle their way out of the Genesis Compound. By Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, and a bunch of guys who draw like Jim Lee. **$1.95**

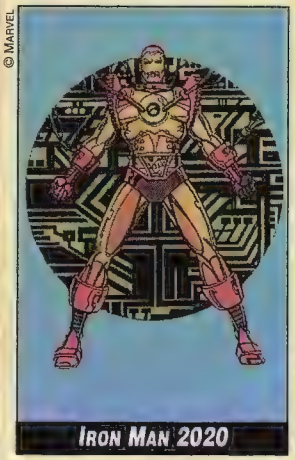
Green Lantern #54

DC COMICS *Zero Hour* is coming! A future Los Angeles blinks into existence (like one wasn't plenty), and Green Lantern must fight a massive earthquake. Also, Major Force threatens GL's woman. Is GL's testosterone level high enough to save her when his power ring fizzles? (*Zero Hour* watchers might be interested in reading *Showcase '94* #9, a *Zero Hour* tie-in wherein Waverider and Monarch duke it out.) By Ron Marz, Steven Carr, and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.50**

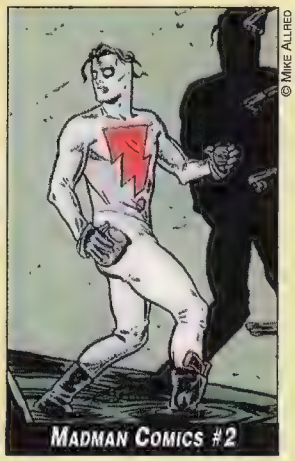
Hellboy: Seed of Destruction #4

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Hellboy's first adventure reaches its chilling climax far beneath the Cavendish mansion, where Hellboy battles the grasping bony fingers of...well, just a giant hand. (Kinda anticlimactic, ain't it?) And hey, Hellboy's pal Liz Sherman is sacrificed. (I want the drumsticks!) Plotted and drawn by Mike Mignola and scripted by John Byrne. Mignola says, "Hellboy has learned that he was brought to Earth to be part of its destruction. He's very upset, and to save the world, he has to go up against the 123-year-old wizard that brought him here." And wait, don't fergit Art Adams's "Monkeyman and O'Brien" backup feature! **$2.50**

MORE PICKS



IRON MAN 2020



MADMAN COMICS #2

INCREDIBLE HULK #420

MARVEL Has the Pantheon found a cure for AIDS? Former Hulk sidekick Jim Wilson wants to know, seeing as he's HIV-positive. He could become the Pantheon's first test subject, but at a price. If it doesn't work, Jim might get full-blown AIDS. Can the Hulk help him with his decision? By Peter David, Gary Frank, and Cam Smith. **$1.50**

IRON MAN 2020

MARVEL In this 64-page bookshelf edition, Arno Stark, the mercenary Iron Man of the year 2020, must rescue the daughter of a prominent computer technologist and her boyfriend. His reward: critical technology that could put Stark International on top of the world, ma. This one-shot is written by Walt Simonson and drawn by Bob Wiacek. **$5.95**

JOHN BYRNE'S NEXT MEN: POWER #4

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Everything blows up this issue! No joke! As the Next Men face more fictional Dollar Comics characters, Manhattan is destroyed when Sandy Tolliver's powers go haywire. So what happens to Sandy? Well, that Byrne guy ain't talkin', but he will say this: "Anybody who thinks there hasn't been enough action in *Next Men* will probably be satisfied by this one." For mature readers. **$2.50**

LOBO #8

DC COMICS While gunnin' for a nutty villain on the planet Kannit, Lobo and his band of merry men meet the Main Man's worst enemy: the Hypno-Hustler! (Err, actually, DC's not saying who; we thought we'd embellish a bit. Nice try, eh?) By Alan Grant, Val Semeiks, and John Dell. **$1.95**

MADMAN COMICS #2

LEGEND/DARK HORSE After discovering the secrets of Mott the alien and the mutating beatniks, more mysteries arise. Madman and the gang make their way to Buzztown, where countless robots are being constructed. Who's building the robots? What's their purpose? Do they serve decaf? Does writer/artist Mike Allred even know? He says, "This issue, Madman meets...himself. Or at least his facsimile..." Besides that, this issue boasts dangerous mechanics, rival suitors, secret passageways, a surprise party, nuptials, and cover-to-cover adventure! **$2.95**

MANTRA #12

MALIBU Mantra joins forces with the Strangers to keep Boneyard from plunging Earth into a "Demon Night." Will they stop him? Probably, but if we told ya, you wouldn't buy the book. By Mike W. Barr, Terry Dodson, and Andrew Pepoy. **$1.95**

MARS ATTACKS #2

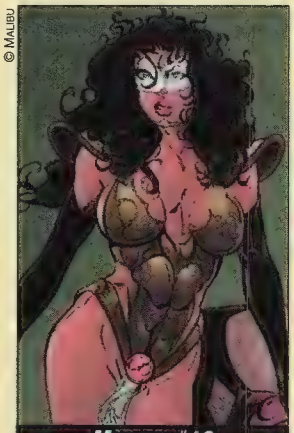
TOPPS The devastation of Earth continues as the fun-loving Martians lose control of the gigantic insects they mutated (betcha you didn't see that one comin'). But Earth has one weapon that could destroy the Martians. Too bad the Martians've found out about it... By Keith Giffen and Charles Adlard, with a backup tale by Len Brown, Giffen, and Dave Simons. **$2.95**

MARVELS #0

MARVEL The four-issue series that proved to be too popular for its own price tag has a companion book, and it happens to be this one. You might think it's a cop-out issue, but it reprints the eight-page Human Torch origin story from *Marvel Age* #130 and has sketches, designs, and stuff from series artist Alex Ross (who's not only good but can honestly say that Namor looks just like Michael Keaton). If you think that's neat, wait'll you see the awesome Spidey vs. Green Goblin cover it sports. **$2.95**

NEW WARRIORS #50

MARVEL "Time and Time Again," the conclusion. In this double-sized bonanza, the "New" New Warriors (that's kinda fun to say out loud. New New Warriors. Go ahead, try it) and the Lady Sphinx take on that wascally Sphinx guy while the other Warriors remain scattered throughout time. Will members of the old New Warriors die? You never know what that Nicieza fella's thinkin', do ya? By Fabian Nicieza, Darick Robertson, and Larry Mahlstedt. **$2.95 (COLLECTOR'S EDITION), $2.00 (REGULAR EDITION)**



MANTRA #12

MARVELS #0

MORE PICKS

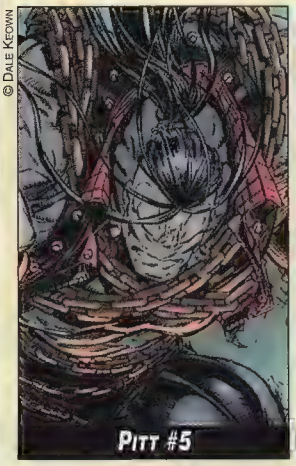
PITT #5
IMAGE Now that Zoyvod is toast, Timmy lies unconscious in a New York City hospital with Pitt keeping vigil. (While Pitt's there, he may wanna see how much it'd cost to have a nose stapled to his kisser.) By Brian Hotton and Dale Keown. **$1.95**

PRIME #13
MALIBU Heyyyy, 48 pages...so that's where all those comic pages that shoulda been in *Deathblow* are going. Anyway, Prime tussles with both Kutt and Planet Class, but who's got the biggest biceps of them all??? (Guess it all depends on how Darick Robertson draws 'em.) By Gerard Jones, Len Strazewski, and the aforementioned Darick Robertson. Jones says, "This issue, we're turning up the volume on the 'Rogue Prime' story. He has to fight two of the strongest opponents he's ever had to face and...he gets really pissed off." **$2.95**

ROBIN #9
DC COMICS "KnightsEnd: Aftermath," Part 1 (of 2). Bruce Wayne and Tim Drake reconcile, but both must deal with what happened to Azrael. Plus, Robin starts to feel as if he's no longer needed by Batman. By Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett, and Ray Kryssing. Dixon says, "It's a reaffirmation of the Batman/Robin relationship. It's mostly about Robin questioning his place in the post-'KnightsEnd' world of Batman." The story continues in *Catwoman* #13, which ties up "KnightsEnd" in a neat li'l bow. **$1.50**

SANDMAN #63
VERTIGO/DC "The Kindly Ones," the last major story arc of the series (so is Sandy gonna die or what?) continues as Rose Walker, the heroine of "The Doll's House" saga from *Sandman* #9-#16, comes face to face with Morpheus. All this plus the might of the Furies is unleashed. (Rumor has it that at the end of this issue, Sandman goes grim and gritty and gets a gun and a cigar.) By Neil Gaiman, Marc Hempel, and D'Israeli. For mature readers, dincha know? **$1.95**

SAVAGE DRAGON #11
IMAGE The Fiend returns in a new body and goes after the Dragon, who, after having the crapola kicked out of him by the Overlord a couple of issues back, is not the best guy to annoy these days. By Erik Larsen. **$1.95**


© Dale Keown
PITT #5

© DC Comics
ROBIN #9

© Erik Larsen
SAVAGE DRAGON #11

© DC Comics
THE SPECTRE #21

SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #215
MARVEL It's Spidey vs. the Scorpion! (Lemme guess—Scorpion is trying to kill J. Jonah Jameson or something.) Regardless, Spidey stalks his prey and...an innocent might die at his hands. (Wow...the one Marvel character who should never be grim and gritty. Goodbye, Spidey; we'll miss you.) By Tom DeFalco and Sal Buscema. **$1.50**

THE SPECTRE #21
DC COMICS The Spectre and Naiad the water elemental beat the stuffing outta each other, as Prof. Hazzard gains possession of the Spear of Destiny—the only weapon powerful enough to destroy the Spectre. (Yes, but it doesn't sound anywhere near as cool as "The Ultimate Nullifier.") Guest starring Superman, who is asked by the government to halt the spirit of vengeance. (The Spectre, not Ghost Rider.) By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. Mandrake hints, "As it turns out, the Spear of Destiny has got a curse on it, so it's not the pure weapon they think it is..." **$1.95**

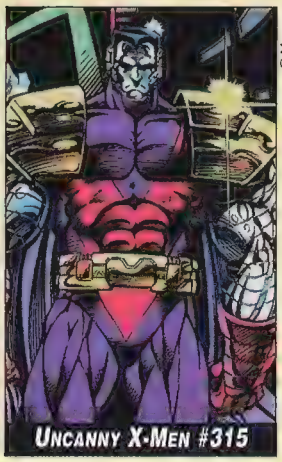
SPIDER-MAN #49
MARVEL This issue concludes the Hobgoblin/Demogoblin storyline. Good thing too, 'cause Spidey's a little cuckoo these days. He's falling deeper and deeper into the Spider-Man persona...and he can't get up! (Geez, this joke's becoming the "Where's the beef?" of the '90s. It's not even funny anymore!) By Howard Mackie, Tom Lyle, and Scott Hanna. **$1.95**

SUPERBOY #7
DC COMICS "Worlds Collide," Part 8 (of 14). Metropolis and Dakota have officially merged (Wall Street must be having a tizzy!) and Superboy, Static, and Rocket must stop Rift from torturing the scientists who created him. By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. Continued in *Hardware* #18, *Superman: The Man of Steel* #36, *Icon* #16, *Steel* #7, *Blood Syndicate* #17,

MORE PICKS

© Rob Liefeld

Supreme #13


© Marvel

Uncanny X-Men #315

and *Static* #14, where all heck breaks loose and the Blood Syndicate all lose their pants. Err, well...collect 'em all anyway! **$1.50**

Superman #92

DC COMICS "Massacre in Metropolis," Part 1 (of 2). The alien warrior Massacre returns to Earth basically to pummel Superman. And in *Adventures of Superman* #515, he does his best. (Are all Superman villains these days just big guys who punch things?) By Dan Jurgens with Joe Rubinstein. **$1.50**

Supreme #13

IMAGE "Supreme Madness," Part 1 (of 6). Now that he's powerless, Supreme allies himself with his nemesis, Grizlock. Well, Supie comes a li'l bit undone and goes into a rampage, forcing Union to try to stop him in *Supreme* #14, also shipping this month. By the Extreme Studios staff. **$2.50**

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #15

VALIANT "Return of Captain Red," Part 3 (of 3). Turok fights the techno-pirate of the Lost Land (don't tell Chakka and Holly), whose bionisaur crew thinks Turok is good eatin'. By Tim Truman, Howard Simpson, and Randy Elliott. Truman says, "From a writing standpoint, it's a fun story, but I tried to inject a little depth into Turok's character, where he actually realizes he's out of place in this modern world. This story dovetails into the *Turok* #0 story I've written [shipping later this year]." **$2.50**

Uncanny X-Men #315

MARVEL Colossus learns that hindsight is always 20/20 as he plots to end his association with the Acolytes. Unfortunately, his meal ticket is good ol' Magneto himself. By Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira, and Dan Green. **$1.50**

Violator #2

IMAGE What do you do if you're a short, fat, scabby demon? Well, either ya work for *Wizard* or you kick up yer heels and head for the hills! But first ya gotta look for Spawn to help kick your four brother demons' butts. Plus, the Admonisher tries to solve a Mafia murder mystery. By Alan Moore, Bart Sears, and Mark Pennington. **$1.95**

Web of Spider-Man #115

MARVEL "Live and Let Die," Part 3. Spidey's on the trail of his newest mysterious foe (ooo...another one). Meanwhile, Peter Parker finally speaks to the shadowy figure who's been checking up on Aunt May all these years. (It's probably just Doc Kevorkian waitin' to give May some of his juice.) By Terry Kavanagh, Alex Saviuk, and Stephen "The Hounds of" Baskerville. **$1.50**

Wolverine #84

MARVEL Just when you thought Alpha Flight was so hideous that you'd never ever have to see 'em again...they're back. Yep, Heather Hudson and crew make a rare appearance as Wolvie comes to grips with what he's become. By Larry Hama, Adam Kubert, and Mark Farmer. **$1.95**

X-Factor #105

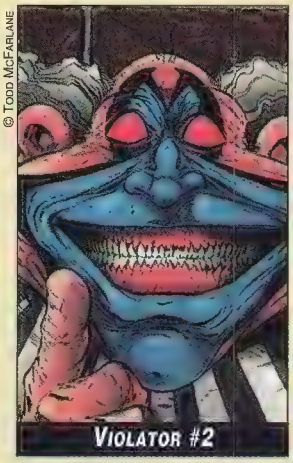
MARVEL A major X-Men villain *dies* in this issue, plain and simple. As a matter of fact, Marvel says, "If you miss this issue, you're not an X-Men fan." So you better listen or Stan Lee is gonna come to your house and beat you senseless with his soapbox. (But then again, shouldn't you be an X-Factor fan and not an X-Men fan?) By J.M. DeMatteis, Jan Duursema, and Al Milgrom. **$1.50**

X-Force #37

MARVEL Nimrod (nice name, jerk), the superduper future Sentinel, returns! Well, now that he's back, he's gotta tone down that mutant population that's running rampant through the Marvel Universe and comic book shops everywhere. His first target? Cable, of course. By Fabian Nicieza, Antonio Daniel, and Jon Holdredge. **$1.50**

X-Men #35

MARVEL Jean and Scott return from the future with a biiiiiiig secret (winning Lotto numbers?). But they won't get to blab until they combat a pack of long-dead Marauders. (Villains returning from the dead? When did this start happening?) By Fabian Nicieza, Andy Kubert, and Matt Ryan. **$1.50**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Violator #2

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X-Factor #105

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PREMIERES

Comic book collectors place a great deal of importance on #1 and #0 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully. Number one and zero issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes popular. Compiled here are all the #1 issues which are shipping in June. (CE indicates a Collector's Edition.)

Alice Cooper: Last Temptation of Alice #1
Marvel $4.95

Annex #1
Marvel $1.75

Aquaman #1
DC Comics $1.50

Archie Meets the Punisher #1: When Worlds Collide
Archie Comics $2.95

The Art of Zen Intergalactic Ninja Special #1
Express $2.95

Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire
DC Comics $4.95

Blaze #1
Marvel $2.95

Bloodfire #0
Lightning Com. $3.50

Break the Chain #1
Marvel $6.99

Cadillacs & Dinosaurs: Man-Eater #1
Topps Comics $2.50

Chaos Effect Alpha
Valiant free

Classic Star Wars: A New Hope #1
Dark Horse $3.95

Comics' Greatest World: Will to Power #1
Dark Horse $1.00

Deadpool #1
Marvel $2.50

A Distant Soil Sketchbook #1
Aria Press $1.75

Indiana Jones and the Golden Fleece #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Judge Dredd #1
DC Comics $1.95

Lobo: In the Chair #1
DC Comics $1.95

Machine Man 2020 #1
Marvel $2.00

Marvels #0
Marvel $2.95

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Marvel $2.95

Pantera #1
Malibu Comics $3.95

The Punisher Meets Archie: When Worlds Collide
Marvel CE $3.95

Ray Bradbury's Martian Chronicles Special Edition #1
Topps Comics $2.50

The Shadow Movie Adaptation #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Son of Kill Image
Boneyard Press $2.95

Spider-Man: The Arachnis Project #1
Marvel $1.75

Spider-Man: Web of Doom #1
Marvel $1.75

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Hearts and Minds #1
Malibu Comics $2.50

Star Trek: The Next Generation—The Series Finale
DC Comics $3.95

Superboy Annual #1
DC Comics $2.95

Time Cop Movie Adaptation #1
Dark Horse $2.50

Union #0
Image $2.50

Vamps #1
DC Comics $1.95

Venom: Nights of Vengeance #1
Marvel $2.95

Victory #1
Topps Comics $2.50

Youngblood #1: The Silent Edition
Image $12.95

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WHAT IF? & ALL CHARACTERS DEPICTED™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

What If? (vol. 1) #34

Writers: ***Various***
Artists: ***Various***
Current Value: ***$3.50***

In 1982, a simpler time when comics were bought more for their content than their market value, Marvel's editorial staff decided to have a little fun. They played up the nature of their oftentimes morbid and melancholy *What If?* title by printing some very amusing stories in issue #34.

Behind the Bob Layton-drawn cover, readers witnessed alternate-reality versions of Marvel Universe characters run amok. Instead of the standard fare, such as "What if Phoenix Had Lived?" and "What if Wolverine Had Killed the Hulk?," Marvel mainstays like Frank Miller, Roger Stern, Jim Shooter, and Layton churned out one- or two-page tales portraying outrageous scenarios like "What if Cyclops's Energy Beams Came Out of His Ears?," "What If Ghost Rider Owned a Fast-Food Franchise?," and "What If Daredevil Were Deaf Instead of Blind?"

In this, one of the funniest single issues of the '80s, Marvel proved that even though it was the largest comic book publisher in the world, it had a sense of humor about itself and its characters. Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you look at it), Marvel only did one humor issue in the first series, thus making it a classic. ☆

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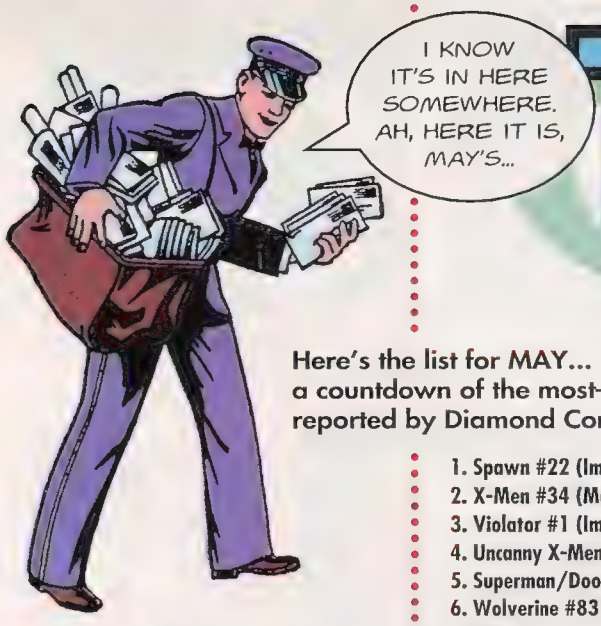

TOP 100

Here's the list for MAY...
a countdown of the most–ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors Inc. (CE=Collector's Edition)

what was hOt 1 yeAr ago...

1. Spawn #13 (Image)
2. WildC.A.T.s Trilogy #1 (Image)
3. Shadowhawk II #1 (Image)
4. X-O Manowar #0 (Valiant)
5. StormWatch #0 (Image)
6. Deathblow #2 (Image)
7. X-Factor #92 (Marvel)
8. Youngblood: Strike File #3 (Image)
9. Brigade #2 (Image)
10. Superman #79 (DC)

2 yeArs ago...

1. Spawn #1 (Image)
2. X-Men #10 (Marvel)
3. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #1 CE (DC)
4. Uncanny X-Men #290 (Marvel)
5. Infinity War #2 (Marvel)
6. X-Force #12 (Marvel)
7. Spider-Man #24 (Marvel)
8. Web of Spider-Man #90 (Marvel)
9. Eclipso: The Darkness Within #1 (DC)
10. Ghost Rider #27 (Marvel)

3 yeArs ago...

1. X-Force #2 (Marvel)
2. Spider-Man #14 (Marvel)
3. Infinity Gauntlet #3 (Marvel)
4. Adventures of Captain America #1 (Marvel)
5. Punisher: P.O.V. #3 (Marvel)
6. Ghost Rider #17 (Marvel)
7. Uncanny X-Men #280 (Marvel)
8. War of the Gods #1 (DC)
9. New Titans Annual #7 (DC)
10. Terminator: Secondary Objectives #1 (Dark Horse)

1. **Spawn #22 (Image)**
2. **X-Men #34 (Marvel)**
3. **Violator #1 (Image)**
4. **Uncanny X-Men #314 (Marvel)**
5. **Superman/Doomsday #3 (DC)**
6. **Wolverine #83 (Marvel)**
7. **WildC.A.T.s #11 (Image)**
8. **Batman #509 (DC)**
9. **Adv. of Cyclops & Phoenix #3 (Marvel)**
10. **Superman: The Man of Steel #35 (DC)**
11. Action Comics #701 (DC)
12. X-Force #36 (Marvel)
13. Superman #91 (DC)
14. Adventures of Superman #514 (DC)
15. X-Men 2099 #10 (Marvel)
16. Cyberforce #5 (Image)
17. Gen^{13} #4 (Image)
18. X-Factor #104 (Marvel)
19. Detective Comics #676 (DC)
20. Prophet #7 (Image)
21. Amazing Spider-Man #391 (Marvel)
22. Beavis & Butt-Head #5 (Marvel)
23. StormWatch #25 (Image)
24. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #29 (DC)
25. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #62 (DC)
26. Robin #8 (DC)
27. Force Works #1 (Marvel)
28. Catwoman #12 (DC)
29. The Maxx #9 (Image)
30. Superboy #6 (DC)
31. Cable #13 (Marvel)
32. Psi-Lords: Reign of the Starwatchers #1 (Valiant)*
33. Deathblow #4 (Image)
34. Spider-Man #48 (Marvel)
35. Worlds Collide #1 CE (DC)
36. Deathblow #5 (Image)
37. Kindred #3 (Image)
38. Venom: The Mace #3 (Marvel)
39. Steel #6 (DC)
40. Spider-Man 2099 #21 (Marvel)
41. Brigade #25 (Image)
42. Green Lantern #53 (DC)
43. Codename: Stryke Force #4 (Image)
44. Team Youngblood #9 (Image)
45. Excalibur #79 (Marvel)
46. Fantastic Four #390 (Marvel)
47. Bloodstrike #25 (Image)
48. Sandman #62 (DC)
49. Supreme #25 (Image)
50. Incredible Hulk #419 (Marvel)
51. Spider-Man/X-Factor: Shadowgames #3 (Marvel)
52. Daredevil #330 (Marvel)
53. Simpsons Comics #4 (Bongo)
54. Newmen #2 (Image)
55. Ghost Rider 2099 #3 (Marvel)
56. Star Wars: Droids #2 (Dark Horse)
57. Spectacular Spider-Man #214 (Marvel)
58. Web of Spider-Man #114 (Marvel)
59. Ninjak #7 (Valiant)
60. The Ren & Stimpy Show #20 (Marvel)
61. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Annual #4 (DC)
62. Black Cat #1 (Marvel)
63. Martha Washington Goes to War #1 (Dark Horse)
64. Avengers #376 (Marvel)
65. Aliens/Predator Deadliest...Species #6 (Dark Horse)
66. Lobo #7 (DC)
67. Star Slammers #1 (Malibu)
68. Silver Surfer #94 (Marvel)
69. Captain America #429 (Marvel)
70. Ghost Rider #51 (Marvel)
71. Guardians of the Galaxy #50 CE (Marvel)
72. Ren & Stimpy Summer Jobs Special (Marvel)
73. X-O Manowar #31 (Valiant)
74. X-Men Adventures Season II #6 (Marvel)
75. Phantom Force #2 (Image)
76. Freak Force #6 (Image)
77. War Machine #4 (Marvel)
78. Hardware #17 (DC)
79. Icon #15 (DC)
80. Blood Syndicate #16 (DC)
81. Steel Annual #1 (DC)
82. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #14 (Valiant)
83. Iron Man #306 (Marvel)
84. New Warriors #49 (Marvel)
85. Warstrike #1 (Malibu)
86. Blade: The Vampire Hunter #1 (Marvel)
87. Galactic Guardians #1 (Marvel)
88. Shadowhawk Gallery #1 (Image)
89. Magnus Robot Fighter #39 (Valiant)
90. Thor #476 (Marvel)
91. Bloodshot #19 (Valiant)
92. Lobo Annual #2 (DC)
93. Lobo: A Contract on Gawd #4 (DC)
94. Doom 2099 #19 (Marvel)
95. Rune #5 (Malibu)
96. Armorines #3 (Valiant)
97. Punisher 2099 #18 (Marvel)
98. 'Breed #5 (Malibu)
99. Rai #24 (Valiant)
100. Punisher #92 (Marvel)

*Solicited as *Starwatchers #1*

TOP 10 JUNE 1994

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of dealers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest books. Here are the 10 best-selling comics for JUNE '94.**

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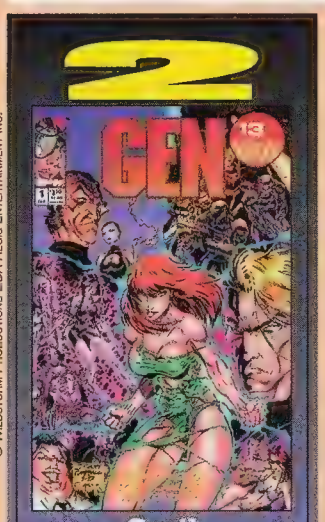
Prophet #4A
Artist
Dan Panosian
Writer
Rob Liefeld

How big do you think Prophet is if the head of the guy standing in front of him is smaller than one of Prophet's abdominal muscles? Pretty big. Makes you wonder how big his toilet seat is. Anyway, this here's the special variant *Prophet* #4 cover, which Extreme Studios shipped in limited amounts (less than 20 percent of the entire run), which drove the back issue market into a feeding frenzy, which resulted in this little gem being king of the Top 10 hill for three months straight. In case just having a variant cover wasn't enough to light a fire beneath collectors' butts, Extreme had that Stephen Platt fella do the variant, which was like throwing gasoline on the fire.



© Wildstorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment Inc.

Gen[13] #1
Artist
J. Scott Campbell
Writer
Brandon Choi

Gen[13] is another one of those books for which demand far exceeds supply. We'll tell ya why. The title was first introduced as *Gen X* via ads that ran last spring (back in the pages of *Wizard* #23!), and fans eagerly anticipated the book. Unforeseen circumstances resulted in it being resolicited last fall as *Gen*[13]. Retailers were feeling the bite from the overabundance of product last spring and summer, and when they were given the chance to reorder the issue, they penciled in significantly fewer numbers. The fan community, however, never forgot the book, and turned out in droves to buy it. Hence the immediate and continued secondary market action on this book.

© Wildstorm Productions DBA Aegis Entertainment Inc.

Gen[13] #2
Artist: J. Scott Campbell
Writer: Brandon Choi

OK, you already know a whole bunch about *Gen*[13], but here's some more tasty info: to avoid any possible legal hassles with Marvel and their upcoming *Generation X* title, Jim Lee changed the name of *Gen X* to *Gen*[13], as in the 13th generation of Americans. (It's still a neat name.) To help publicize the much-delayed launch of the title, a *Gen*[13] #1/2 comic was featured in *Wizard* #30 (hey...that's us!), which whetted fans' appetites and helped land *Gen*[13] #1 and #2 here on the Top 10 hottest comics chart. With underordering on the first two issues and the way-hot Pitt appearing in the third, this series kicked butt.

© Marvel Entertainment Group

Marvels #2
Artist: Alex Ross
Writer: Kurt Busiek

One of those rare Prestige Format (aka expensive) books to garner secondary market attention, *Marvels* #2 has a lot of things going for it. First, the cover sported a high price (usually resulting in low orders). Second, its pages had the awesome painted artwork of Alex Ross. Third, its story featured an early adventure of the X-Men, the hottest comic characters on the planet these days. Lastly, it was a #2 issue, and we've noticed lately that #2s have been ordered in far fewer quantities than their more glamorous #1 counterparts. All in all, it makes for quite a solid Top 10 book.

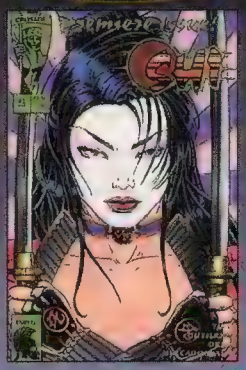
5

© MTV Networks

Beavis & Butt-Head #1
Artist: Rick Parker
Writer: Mike Lackey

Fueled by their monstrously popular MTV show, Beavis and Butt-Head have definitely made their mark on the comic book scene. Like *The Ren & Stimpy Show* #1 (geez, that thing is *still* selling like steroids in a locker room), *Beavis & Butt-Head* #1 was underordered, and fans gobbled up this ish in no time flat. This book's contents are sure to appeal to *B&B* fans, since the two hoodlums do their usual dirty deeds (we won't go into 'em in detail here). Instead of taking shots at music videos, however, they tear apart crappy comic books, which are pretty darn easy to find.

6

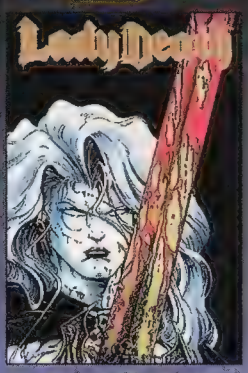


© William Elliott Tucci

Shi #1
Artist: W. Tucci & H. Mercadoocasio
Writer: W. Tucci & P. Gutierrez

We appear to be witnessing "The Dawn of the Hot-Looking Bad Girl Comics." It seems that this once-underground segment of the collecting community has come aboveground, giving some of the latest bad girl books large secondary market presence (see the next two listings). *Shi: The Way of the Warrior* #1 is the latest comic to take advantage of this phenomenon. Shi is Ana Ishikawa, a woman who's got superior fighting skills and ancient Oriental philosophy (as well as the requisite killer bod) on her side in her battle against ancient evil forces. The first issue of this title has met with amazing success, as the entire 50,000-plus print run was snapped up mere days after its release.

7

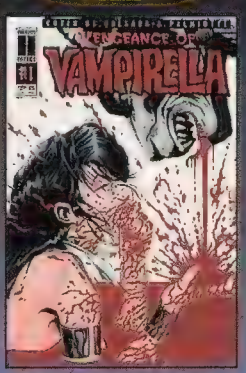


© Brian Pulido

Lady Death #1
Artist: Steven Hughes
Writer: Brian Pulido

Quite the stunning cover. That's one of the reasons why this book did so well. You can't help but notice this beaut sittin' on the shelf, and when you pick it up (which most people did—this baby sold out!) and thumb through it, you'll marvel at the sight of an extremely healthy female embodiment of death walking around in tiny underwear. Fans (mostly guys, we imagine) went nuts, and boom, another hot book—another hot bad girl book—was born. Once you get past the cover and interior cheesecake shots, it's actually not a bad story. It reveals the origin of Lady Death (who made her debut in the pages of *Evil Ernie*), and let's just say it's not a happy story.

8



© Harris Publications Inc.

Vengeance of Vampirella #1
Artist: Buzz
Writer: Tom Sniegoski

The last of our bad girl triumvirate, *Vengeance of Vampirella* features the best-known and (dare we say it?) oldest bad girl in comics. Like the two other bad girl books in this Top 10, this book hit the stands and did a rapid disappearing act (Vampi publisher Harris Comics had to go to a second printing). The cover is a stunning wraparound foil job with Vampi (as her longtime fans call her) awash in sea of blood, rendered by hot art tandem Joe "Enhance This" Quesada and Jimmy "Ya Hump" Palmiotti. Another bad girl book with secondary market muscle, *Vengeance of Vampirella* is proof that in comics, hot babes are indeed hot!

9

© DC Comics

Green Lantern #47
Artist: Scott Kolins
Writer: Gerard Jones

Right before characterization was thrown to the wind in the three-issue "Emerald Twilight" storyline and right after the much-sought-after "Reign of the Supermen" tie-in, *Green Lantern* #47 kinda snuck onto the comic shelves with nary a sound. It disappeared even more quickly and quietly. With all the hoopla surrounding the new GL (who, by the way, is a pretty darn cool replacement; the book is the best it's been in years), *Green Lantern* has become pretty popular. Now fans are starving for key back issues, and *GL* #47 just wasn't ordered heavily—so boom, done deal. The story, which teams old pre-*Crisis* buds Green Arrow and Green Lantern, is a mite disappointing, though.

10

© Marvel Entertainment Group

Wolverine #75
Artist: Adam Kubert
Writer: Larry Hama

The elder statesman of this month's Top 10, *Wolverine* #75, is still going strong nearly eight months after its release. We've told you just about everything we can about this book since it took up residence here back in *Wizard* #29 (whoa! *Seven* months ago!)...so let's tell it again. When word spread that something big was happenin' to Wolvie in *X-Men* #25, it was taken with a grain a salt. What happened was our boy Logan got all his adamantium sucked out; *Wolverine* #75 deals with his fight for life after said happening and his discovery that he has claws made of normal bone where his metal claws used to be. (How's that for continuity in the crapper?) ☆

Wizard Market WATCH

by
Jon Warren

Summer Heat

The summer convention season is about to start. That means lots of sales and lots of market activity.

Two huge June shows start the summer selling season: Heroes Con in Charlotte, N.C., and Dragon Con in Atlanta. July starts with the big Fourth of July show in Chicago. And in August, there's the granddaddy of them all: the San Diego Comic Con. These four shows set the pace for the convention segment of the comics market for the rest of the year. As always, your roving *Wizard* reporter will be there to get a handle on all the latest market trends. Keep watching these pages.

In the meantime, let's take a look at the current state of this ever-changing comic market.

Remember to check out the Price Guide and the bound-in Tip Sheet for the latest comic book prices. The Price Guide shows an average of prices reported to us by our *Wizard* VIPs and our survey networkers. The Tip Sheet shows last-minute changes that occurred just before we went to press. Prices may vary in your area.

RECENT (1991-1994)

MARVEL

X-titles remain the best sellers for Marvel. *Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men*, *X-Men Adventures*, and *X-Men Unlimited* lead the pack. The first two have been extremely strong sellers for years; the *Adventures* book, which effectively targets the cartoon-watching audience, is getting stronger each month; and the *Unlimited* book, by far Marvel's most popular *Unlimited* title, has proven itself in the market with excellent, important X-stories.

After a great start, demand for *Beavis & Butt-Head* has fallen off a bit. Collectors are apparently waiting to see if the series will definitely be this year's *Ren & Stimpy*.

Marvels #1-#3 continue to be at the top of many collectors' wish lists. They're hot, and prices continue to inch upward. The incredible quality of these books is the main reason for the demand. It surprised many retailers, who ordered somewhat cautiously (read: lightly). *Marvels* #4 is quickly becoming hard to find, and the upcoming *Marvels* #0 should be scooped up by many fans.

Moon Knight #55-#60 are in a holding pattern while collectors wait to see the much-anticipated *Prophet* #5 by Stephen Platt. The *Prophet* #4 promotion—version A bears a rare Platt cover—has definitely helped secure those *Moon Knights* as books to find, buy, and keep.

DC

Green Lantern #50 has been shooting up in value. Because of the major story developments in this issue, people expected it to be a grabbable book, but now that Kyle Rayner is hitting the "hot hero" charts, his first appearance as GL has made #50 even more sought after.

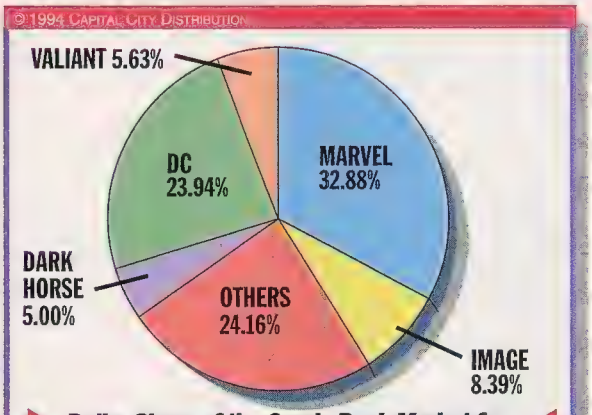
The Superman and Batman books are other sales leaders at DC as of this writing. DC's present storylines—"The Fall of Metropolis" in the Supertitles and "KnightsEnd" in the Battitles—are keeping the excitement going by providing solid, entertaining, old-fashioned tales. The "Worlds Collide" crossover between the Superman and Milestone books has begun to turn new readers onto both lines.

Adaptations of the Batman cartoon hold an amazing attraction for collectors. *Batman Adventures* and *Batman: Mad Love*, a well-done Joker/Harlequin story, are among the other top sellers for DC.

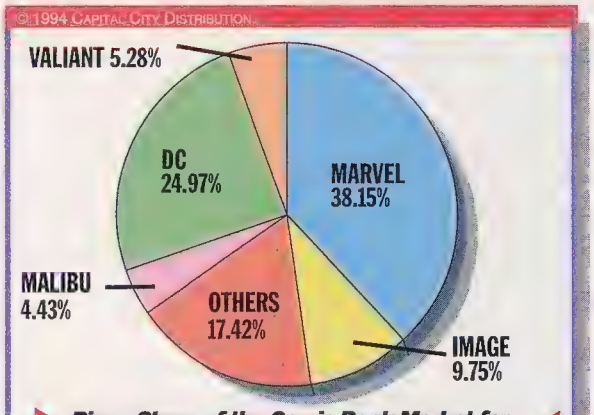
The two Spawn/Batman crossovers came and went without the big bang that many retailers expected. Most liked the artwork on the Image version better. It remains to be seen whether the Image book will command a major premium as a back issue.

IMAGE

Image's flagship title, *Spawn*, is still among the best sellers in all of comics, both as a new release and as a back issue. But *Prophet* is making inroads into Spawn's ter-



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for APRIL, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for APRIL, according to Capital City Distribution

ritory: #4A already sells for over $12 in many parts of the country. With Platt beginning his highly anticipated stint on the book, *Prophet* has the potential to take over as Image's No. 1 title. Another scorcher for Image is *Gen*[13]: people can't get enough of this well-written team book with stories by the ever-popular Jim Lee.

VALIANT

Ninjak and *X-O Manowar*, which star two of Valiant's most reliably popular heroes, are the sales leaders at Valiant; all else is pretty quiet right now. *Magnus* and *Rai* should be picking up new readers soon, thanks to the recent revamping of their storylines. "The Chaos Effect" crossover is sure to breathe some intense life into the Valiant line.

OTHER PUBLISHERS

Lady Death #1 from Chaos! Comics continues to be a scorcher. Recent reports say that prices have hit the $14 mark, and there are still lots of eager buyers. Low supply and high demand are driving the prices way up. A second printing, due out soon, may cool down the heat if enough readers are willing to settle for it.

If you can find a reasonably priced copy of Galaxinovels's *Agent Three-Zero* #1, buy it and run! The book, which shipped before *Moon Knight #55*, features the first published pro artwork of Stephen Platt, a cover piece that's reprinted in the interior. As word about it gets out, this book is becoming unbelievably hard to find.

Bone remains one of the hottest small press comics. Prices for the first printings continue their climb, with #1 selling for extremely high prices in many parts of the country. *Bone* appears to be a success in the industry, although more people need to know about it.

MODERN AGE (1970-1990)

DC

Sandman (vol. 2) continues to be the best-selling DC back issue title of the modern era; collectors of all types and interests have been making their way to the *Sandman* section of back issue bins. Three of the most important of these back issues are #1, #8 (Death's first appearance, which is nearing #1 in value), and #22 (the debut of Daniel, Lyta's son and possibly the next Sandman).

MARVEL

Top sellers in the Marvel Modern Age lineup include *Incredible Hulk* #180-#182 (first Wolverine), *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 (first new X-Men), *Iron Fist* #14 (first Sabretooth), *X-Men* (vol. 1) #94 (second new X-Men), #248 (first Jim Lee art), and #266 (first Gambit); and *Amazing Spider-Man* #300 (30th anniversary issue, origin of and first full Venom story, McFarlane art).

Star Wars comics have been moving out faster than ever before. Retailers who have expanded their stock to include toy collectibles cite the popularity of the original *Star Wars* figures and other toys as the reason for the activity, not to mention persistent rumors regarding the next three *Star Wars* films.

SALES REPORTS

Wizard VIPs reported these interesting recent sales of Modern Age books:

X-Men (vol. 1) #94		
	Very Fine	**$160**
Uncanny X-Men #266		
	Near Mint	**$32**
Star Wars: Dark Empire #1		
	NM	**$30**
Sandman (vol. 2) #1		
	NM	**$35**
Solar, Man of the Atom #1		
	VF	**$25**

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

1 **Todd McFarlane**
Spawn

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

2 **Jim Lee**
WildC.A.T.s

3 **Stephen Platt**
Prophet

4 **Joe Quesada**
Upcoming: Just you wait...

5 **Bart Sears**
Violator

PHOTO: LYNN VARLEY

6 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: A Dame to Kill For

7 **Greg Capullo**
Violator

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

8 **Marc Silvestri**
Cyberforce

9 **Dale Keown**
Pitt

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

10 **Andy Kubert**
X-Men

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

PHOTO: LYNN VARLEY

1 **Frank Miller**
Sin City: A Dame to Kill For

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

2 **Neil Gaiman**
Sandman

3 **Peter David**
Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Sachs & Violens

4 **John Byrne**
Next Men, Danger Unlimited

PHOTO: MITCH JENKINS

5 **Alan Moore**
Violator

6 **Dan Jurgens**
Superman
Upcoming: *Zero Hour*

7 **Chris Claremont**
WildC.A.T.s, Aliens vs. Predator: Deadliest of Species

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

8 **Fabian Nicieza**
New Warriors, Nova, X-Men, Night Thrasher

9 **Ron Marz**
Green Lantern, Silver Surfer

10 **Denny O'Neil**
Upcoming: *Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire, Azrael*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE DEALER SURVEY.

Spawn #5
NM **$8.95**

SILVER AGE (1955-1969)

Demand for some Silver Age keys has taken off recently. *Avengers* #4 (the first Silver Age appearance of Captain America) and *X-Men* (vol. 1) #1 are among the leaders. As a series, *X-Men* and *Amazing Spider-Man* are the best sellers for Marvel.

At DC, *Mystery in Space* #53, containing the first of several Adam Strange stories in that title, is a hot number. Early issues of *Showcase*, always among the most desirable of the Silver Age DCs, are still tough to find and easy to sell. The DC "Big Five" war titles, *Our Army At War*, *Our Fighting Forces*, *G.I. Combat*, *All-American Men of War*, and *Star Spangled War Stories*, are top sellers, and prices for high-grade issues continue to escalate.

SALES REPORTS

Wizard VIPs report these interesting recent sales of Silver Age books:

Amazing Fantasy #15
Very Good-Fine **$2,500**
Amazing Spider-Man #1
VF **$6,700**
Amazing Spider-Man #14
VF+ **$700**
Avengers #4
NM **$1,750**
Iron Man #1
VF-NM **$240**
Showcase #36
Very Good **$100**
Strange Tales #101
Fine **$165**
Strange Tales #110
NM **$1,500**
Strange Tales Annual #1
NM **$550**
Tales of Suspense #39
VF **$1,600**
X-Men (vol. 1) #1
Fine-Very Fine **$1,650**

GOLDEN AGE (1938-1954)

Activity in this area of the market has been brisk during the last 30 days. Tim Cottrill of The Bookery in Ohio reported an increase in demand for Golden Age books at recent shows, as did other VIP reporters.

As usual, demand exceeds supply and no noteworthy collections have hit the market since my last report. However, collectors are looking forward to the buying opportunities that will be presented at the upcoming Sotheby's auction in New York. (See Wizard News.)☆

Market WATCHERS

This is a new section of *Wizard*'s Market Watch column in which we answer your letters regarding the prices and collecting of comic books. We've been getting a sizable barrage of such letters from all over the world, so without further ado, here's this month's batch!

Dear Wizard,

Is *Rai* #0 or *Eternal Warrior* #4 the first appearance of Bloodshot?

J. Cantrell
Kennesaw, GA

This has been a bone of contention for some time because both books shipped in not only same month but the same week. Experts say *EW* is the winner, because it features a cameo appearance of Bloodshot, while the *Rai* book features his actual origin. These days, cameos win out over full appearances in the Hot Book Search. However, Paul Fairchild, direct sales manager at Valiant, says that the company itself sees it as a tie. We've decided to keep *EW* #4 as the first appearance, but we welcome—in fact, we ask for—opinions on this subject.

Dear Wizard,

In your price guide, what does UPC stand for?

Sasha Bell
Maroochydore, Queensland, Australia

Unbelievably poor comic. Actually, it stands for Universal Product Code, the little white box containing a series of parallel black lines of varying thicknesses. It's usually found in the bottom corner of most of today's comic book covers. Many of today's comic stores and department stores scan this code from books and other products when they're first received by the store and then when they're purchased by customers. It provides a quick and easy way to keep electronic tabs on inventory.

This code used to appear only on newsstand editions of comics, but that changed about a year ago. When you're talking about two different versions of a comic—with UPC and without—the value's usually the same. There are a few exceptions, like the first issue of McFarlane's *Spider-Man*, which came in more versions than Sybil had personalities.

Dear Wizard,

I was reading *Wizard* #30 and I noticed that my favorite artist, Richard Bennett, was not listed in the artists/writers glossary [in the Intro to the Price Guide]. I've enjoyed his work in *Uncanny X-Men* #303 and *X-Men* #27 and would like to know of any other projects he has been or will be involved with.

Cyd Tamaribuchi
Aiea, Hawaii

You've probably noticed already, Cyd, but Richard Bennett has been known as "RBe" in our Price Guide since issue #31. Along with the X-books you mentioned, you can discover a fine display of his artistic talent in Continuity's *CyberRad* (vol. 2) #1-#7 and Marvel's *X-Men Unlimited* #4 and *X-Men Survival Guide to the Mansion*. By the way, I told my grandfather, Sidney, about the cool spelling of your name, and he plans to change his to "Cyd" this June.

Dear Wizard,

I have been hearing rumors that *Vampirella* [the five-issue 1992-93 Harris series] had low production numbers on issues #1-#3. Is this true?

Neil Perry
San Antonio, TX

Lower than Madonna's present popularity level, actually. According to Harris's associate publisher and editorial director, Meloney Crawford Chadwick, approximately 75,000 copies of #1 were printed, between 25,000 and 30,000 of #2, and about 75,000 of #3. If you have these three books, as the Material Girl herself might advise, "Hold onto them, and watch them go up." (In value, of course.) Speaking of comics rising in value...

Continued thataway

Dear Wizard,

How do the people that say a certain comic will go up in price know they're right, and what makes it go up?

Cervantes R. Jimenez
Brooklyn, NY

Excellent question, Cervantes. Market experts have immense experience with today's comic book market. They attentively watch the market, and when a book by a popular creator, starring or revamping a hot character, or introducing a soon-to-be-hot character is about to be published, they're ready to grab a copy or two. Lesson of the month: when someone buys about 10 or 20 copies of said book, it's called speculation.

To answer the second part of your question, comic book values are almost always connected to the supply vs. demand rule. If masses of collectors grab copies of *Bloodblood* #129, it becomes scarce, which makes every published copy of the book pretty darn valuable. Speculators used to influence this process by hoarding hundreds of copies of certain books to themselves, but their get-rich-quick schemes backfired faster than you can say "Black Monday." So the pricing process is a bit more stable nowadays, even though there's still some wild stuff going on (see *Moon Knight* #55, *Prophet* #4A, or *any* Stephen Platt book, for that matter).

In case you were wondering, *Wizard* uses a national survey network, including over 1,000 participating retailers, along with a large number of V.I.P. retailers, to compile the guide's highly accurate market values each month. I hope this (long) answer helped!

Dear Wizard,

Was there ever a *Youngblood* #5?

Jared Beresk
East Stroudsburg, PA

Yes, it was a flip book to *Brigade* (mini-series) #4.

Dear Wizard,

Lately, I've been looking through my comic cards, and I've discovered that the Marvel Universe series 2 cards #17 and #18 are in the reverse order of your price guide listing. Could you please tell me what happened?

Ben Cheney
Grand Ledge, MI

Don't you know? It's one of the signs of the apocalypse. The truth is that the listing of the Gambit and Psylocke cards came straight from SkyBox's own (slightly incorrect) checklist card. With last issue's guide, all has been corrected, and card collectors can sleep peacefully again.

Before I vamoose, I'd like to yell "Thank you!" to Christina Jackson of Columbia, Md., and Brendan Walker of Carthage, Mo., for their price guide info. *¡Gracias, amigos!*

Till next month, buckaroos!

—Marc Wilkofsky

If you have a question or comment regarding our Comic Book Price Guide or comic collecting in general, please send a letter to:
Market Watchers
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Missing Link

Hi there! Welcome to *Wizard*'s newest monthly contest. Here's the deal: each month, we'll list three comic book issues that contain something in common, in terms of content, characters, creators, or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is. (Actually, we already know what it is. But we want to know that *you* know too!)

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122, and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy: all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? Of course, we won't make each contest *that* easy. You'll usually have to read through the books to find the answers, but hey, how hard could that be for you comic lovers? By the way, you won't have to be a regular reader of the particular books to figure out the answer.

We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive an *X-Men* (vol. 1) #101, the first appearance of Phoenix, currently valued at $35! So good luck, and good sleuthing!

Here're this month's batch o' books:

© Marvel

Dazzler #27

© Malibu

Protectors #12

© Marvel

X-Factor #90

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #35
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
All entries must be received by July 29, 1994.

If you can read this fine print, then you're in.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and the Bobbitt Bunch. Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Missing Link #35, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 29, 1994. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on August 1, 1994, by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the name of the winner, available after August 31, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #35 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

E.G.O.*

Characters of the World, Unite

by Todd McFarlane

They said it couldn't be done... but it can.

Ever since I was a kid collecting comic books, I've thought that one of the great things about the superhero genre is that you can wonder what would happen if Spidey met the Fantastic Four, or Iron Man, or Dr. Doom. Or what would happen if your favorite artists, who normally draw *Captain America* and *Spider-Man*, switched books. Sometimes these little games that you play in your head produce the ultimate crossover: Marvel's Hulk vs. DC's Darkseid, or a similarly spectacular team-up.

I remember when the first Spider-Man/Superman treasury edition came out; it was the coolest. In hindsight, I realize that Superman would easily kick the crap out of Spidey. But the mere concept of two of my favorite heroes crossing over into the same universe was a neat notion. And that first crossover set fans' minds spinning with possibilities. If you liked Spidey and Superman, then what about Spidey and Batman? Or Spidey and Flash? Or Spidey and...? The list is endless.

The greatest Marvel/DC crossover, in my mind, was the X-Men/New Teen Titans crossover, because it paired the right characters, had the right writing, and had the perfect art team. And it was comic-sized, not treasury-sized like the previous Marvel/DC collaborations.

Around that time, George Pérez was supposed to draw a Justice League of America/Avengers crossover for Marvel and DC. Unfortunately, it never saw the light of day because of intercompany politics. Since then, there have been a few intercompany crossovers from other publishers like DC, Dark Horse, and Valiant. Some of them have gone off without much of a problem and some of them suffered from hitches. But I'm here to say that I just finished doing a Spawn/Batman crossover with DC Comics, and the process can actually be pain-free.

When I first approached DC, the simplest way to get a contract signed was to propose that we each do our own stand-alone story and that we each get to look at the other guy's stuff to make sure nothing drastic was going to happen.

The big factor in getting the crossover approved was giving each side a separate book. If DC and I had combined our efforts to produce a single Spawn/Batman book, as was usually the case with previous intercompany crossovers, it probably never would have been done. The egos involved—especially mine—are way too strong. The easiest way to do it was to let each side take its stab at the team-up.

Basically, both crews were left to their own devices. Given that everyone involved in a crossover ought to be a pro doing the best job possible, the trust factor should be very high. If a creator doesn't trust the other camp, then he's setting himself up for a lot of problems.

I knew that Klaus Janson was going to do the artwork on the DC book, and he's been around the block five times more than I have. The same can be said for writers Alan Grant, Doug Moench, and Chuck Dixon. And with Denny O'Neil editing DC's book, I knew that Spawn was in capable hands.

My role in watching the DC end was more or less as a fan: I got to read the book before anyone else did! As long as they didn't kill Spawn, I knew they were going turn out a product that I, and fans, would be happy with. Did they do exactly what I would have done? Nah, but I didn't expect them to read my mind.

Much to DC's credit, they gave me the freedom with their Batman that I gave them with my Spawn. They let Frank Miller and I have our heads with this; the *Spawn/Batman* book that you see is practically no different than it would have been if we had just decided to do it on our own for the heck of it.

Another big plus to crossovers is that behind-the-scenes people get their chance to shine. We don't always acknowledge their efforts, but we really need them to coordinate our labors. After all, Denny's doing his thing, Frank's doing his, Klaus is doing his, I'm doing mine, et cetera. On my end, I had Terry Fitzgerald and Julia Simmons on top of all the details and getting DC completely into the loop. On DC's end, Terri Cunningham spearheaded things there and gave a lot of responsibility to Cheryl Cramer. I'd like to single out Cheryl for praise; she made sure all needs on both sides were met, and met swiftly. I also especially appreciated DC Publisher Paul Levitz's patience.

Thanks to the people named above, the relationship between myself and DC is still solid, unlike the aftermath of some other intercompany crossovers. In the future, you might even see a sequel to *Spawn/Batman*, if DC is inclined to lend out its character again.

The point of this is that different companies *can* get together; there's no reason why two characters from two different companies can't team up. If you're a fan, that's got to set your mind reeling and make you want to play out those possibilities in your head. Imagine X-Men/WildC.A.T.s, Supreme/Superman, Aliens vs. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Prime/Thor... The list is endless.

Maybe now it can be more than just a mind game. ☆

Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the opinions stated here should write to: E.G.O., 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

Welcome to the new *Wizard* Shows & Conventions! To help connect you with the biggest and best comic book shows and conventions in your area, *Wizard* is still printing all the stuff we used to print in this department. But we've added extra space so you can find out in advance about admission discounts, creator appearances, and other superneat stuff!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

CALIFORNIA

TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT JUNE, SANTA ANA

Comics, Sportscards & Milk Cap Show, Tabb Warehouse, 1928 E. Glenwood, free admission, Tuesdays and Thursdays: 5-10pm, Sundays: 10am-5pm, 714-854-1991. Directions: 55 Freeway between 5/405, Exit 55 at Edinger, go left to Ritchey, go left to Glenwood, go left to 1928 E. Glenwood in Santa Ana. Free parking, free raffles, special promotions at each show, frequent guest appearances.

JUNE 24-26, POMONA

Fan-Con Mid-Year Classic Sportscard & Comic Book Collectors Expo '94, Pomona Fairplex (L.A. County Fairgrounds), 300 tables, $6/day admission, Friday: noon-9pm, Saturday: 10am-9pm, Sunday: 10am-6pm, 619-669-1759. Corporate promotions, sketches, autographs, hourly raffles. Guests: Texas Ranger Juan Gonzalez (Saturday 11am-2pm); Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson (Saturday 2-5pm); Extreme Studios's Dan Panosian (*Prophet*), Mark Pacella (*Doom's IV*), Jonathan Sibal (*Newmen*), and Marlo Alquiza (*Brigade*); Malibu/Ultraverse's Norm Breyfogle (*Prime*), Darick Robertson (*The Solution*), Jeff Johnson (*Solitaire*), Ben Herrera (*Freex, Firearm*), James Hudnall (*Hardcase, The Solution*), Scott Benefiel (*Hardcase*), and Jason Rodriguez (*Hardcase*).

FLORIDA

JUNE 12, TACOMA

Tacoma Comic Con, Tacoma Dome Expo Hall, 100 tables, $3 admission ($2 for people 12 and under), 10:30am-5pm, 206-588-2503. Guests: Shawn McManus, Steve Mitchell, Mike Vosburg, Gary Martin, Aaron Lopresti, Paul Guinan, and Anina Bennett.

NEW JERSEY

JUNE 18, WOODBRIDGE

Comic Book & Comic Art Convention, Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rte. 1 South (across from the Woodbridge Mall), 40 tables, $3 admission, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955. Guests: John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*) and Michael Bair (*Bloodshot Yearbook*).

JUNE 19, BORDENTOWN

Comic Book & Comic Art Convention, Days Inn Hotel, Rte. 206 N. (Exit 7 off the New Jersey Turnpike), 30 tables, $3 admission, 10am-4pm, 908-828-5955. Guests: John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*) and Michael Bair (*Bloodshot Yearbook*).

NEW YORK

JUNE 4-5, NEW YORK CITY

New York ComicCon, Sheraton Towers, 7th Ave. & 52nd St., 200 tables, $10 one-day admission ($15 for two days; $7 for children 6 to 12 and senior citizens; free for children 6 and under; plus discounts for two-person two-day passes), 10am-6pm both days, 908-788-6845.

OHIO

JUNE 26, ST. CLAIRSVILLE

Ohio Valley Comic Con, Days Inn (I-70 at Exit 220), 28 tables, $2 admission, 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056.

TEXAS

JUNE 5, AUSTIN

Sportscards & Comics Show, Wyndham Hotel, 4140 Governor's Row, 35 tables, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-449-8511. Door prizes.

JUNE 18, BEAUMONT

Kingdom Con 6, Beaumont Civic Ctr., 701 Main St., 35 tables, $2 admission, 9am-6pm, 409-860-4848.

JUNE 19, SAN ANTONIO/ LIVE OAK

Bimonthly Card & Comic Show, Live Oak Civic Ctr., Pat Booker Rd. (between I-35 and 1604), 20 tables, $1.50 admission, 10am-6pm, 210-945-0003.

JUNE 25, AUSTIN

Sportscards & Comics Show, Doubletree Hotel, 6505 I-35N, 35 tables, $1.50 admission, 10am-4pm, 713-449-8511. Door prizes.

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Phoenix, Arizona
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Sunday, June 26th 1994
12:00p.m. to 6:00p.m.
Graham Central Station
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Phoenix, Arizona
(602) 839-0919

★★★ ARTISTS SIGNING ★★★

Ryan Benjamin (Union/Union O)
Scott Clark (Stormwatch)
Alex Garner (Gen 13)
Jeff Mariotte (Gen 13)
Dan Fraga (Bloodstrike, Black Flag)
Richard Horie (Bloodstrike)
Jeff Matsuda (Troll, Newmen)
Marat Mychaels (Brigade, Bloodhunter)
Danny Miki (Youngblood)
James Pascoe (Batman-Punisher)
Stephen Platt (Moon Knight, Prophet)
Dan Panosian (Prophet)
Mike Mayhew (Zorro)
Kiko Taganashi (Youngblood)
Byron Tallman (All Extreme)
Tim Townsend (Extreme)
Chap Yaep (Team Youngblood)
Brian Murray (Supreme)
Dan Norton (Gen 13½)
David Amerman (Wrath)

The above listed artists will be appearing at one or both conventions. For more information on the convention in your area, call the phone number listed above for your area.

SHOW CONVENTIONS

JUNE 26, CORPUS CHRISTI
Sportscards & Comics Show, Emerald Beach Holiday Inn, 1102 S. Shoreline, 35 tables, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-449-8511. Door prizes.

JUNE 26, HOUSTON
Comic Carnival Spectacular Show, Holiday Inn Hobby, 9100 Gulf Freeway, 130 tables, $4 admission, 10am-5pm, 713-659-1102. Four ballrooms of guests and comics. Win a trip to the San Diego Con!

JUNE 26, HOUSTON
Sportscards & Comics Show, Medallion Hotel, 3000 N. Loop West, 40 tables, $2 admission, 713-449-8511. Door prizes.

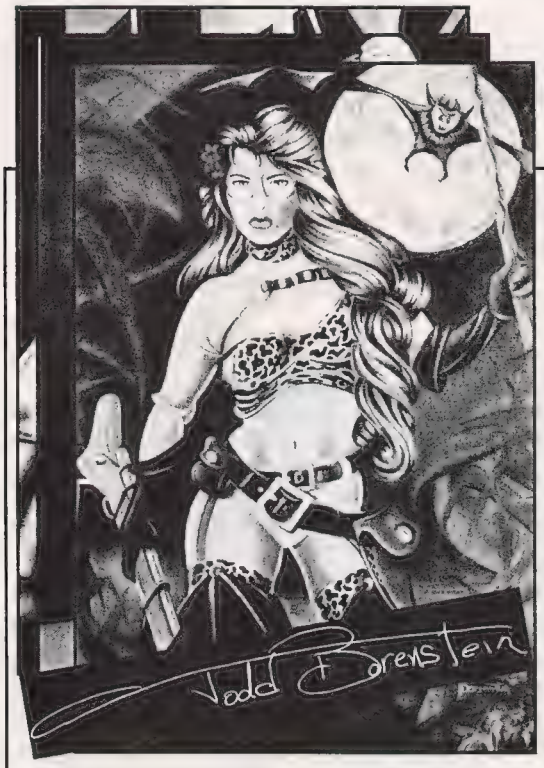
VIRGINIA

JUNE 12, TYSONS CORNER
Capital Associates Comic Book & Trading Card Show, Tysons Corner Ramada Hotel (Exit 10 off I-495), 85 tables, $2 admission, 10am-4pm, 703-503-5834.

WEST VIRGINIA

JUNE 12, CHARLESTON
West Virginia Comic Con, Charleston House Holiday Inn, 600 Kanawha Blvd., 37 tables, $2 admission, 10am-4pm, 216-499-6056.

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.



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WiZaRd BullPen

"Play ball!" Company athletes have begun itchin', scratchin', and cursin' on account of this year's much-anticipated softball season. The Wizard Press team is pumped and ready, thanks in part to personnel from *ER* and *Collector's Sportslook*. (*SL*'s Jim McLauchlin, by the way, is the most dangerous person we know when it comes to handling a softball. Not the best—the most dangerous.) Our first outing will pit us against the bunch from Comics Unlimited comic distributors, and plans are being laid for clashes with Marvel, DC, and Valiant. If you don't recall (and even if you do, we'll graciously remind you anyway), Wizard made its softball debut last year by crushing Valiant like tiny little wine grapes, 19-3 and 9-5. We'll print game highlights and scores all season long.

The Jelly Gauntlet has been thrown down: *Wizard* Editor Pat McCallum, *ER* Art Director Robin "Jamos" Ramos, and Wizard Press Research Assistant Dan Reilly have signed their names to a semilegal contract by which the three will go on strict diets, all in an attempt to outdo the others in terms of weight loss. The participant who loses the highest percentage of weight gets a free lunch at Taco Bell (free plug: try the Choco Taco!) courtesy of the weight-loss runner-up, while he who loses the least percentage of weight works all of Friday, May 27...dressed as a woman. Yup: dress, wig, makeup, padded bra, the whole kit and kaboodle. (Where's Harvey Fierstein when you need him?) We'll have photos of this whole sloppy showdown ASAP.

"Love... Exciting and new." Romance is in the air, and some Wizard Press staffers are enjoying the start of spring by getting hitched. Research Assistant Dan Reilly announced his engagement to Nora Haren; the wedding'll be March 10, 1995. Meanwhile, Customer Service Representative Maria Signorino and her beau Rob Capello took the matrimonial plunge on April 24, 1994. That same day, *ER* Art Director Robin "The Stud Boy" Ramos celebrated his one-year wedding anniversary with his lovely wife Mary. On a slightly darker note, *Wizard* Assistant Editor Brian Cunningham began vibrating violently and exploded yesterday.

UP CLOSE...

Brian Cunningham
Assistant Editor, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What do you do at *Wizard*?
I help edit *Wizard*, punch last-minute info into all of our articles, talk to a lot of industry folks, and quote bad movies for all to enjoy.

What's your favorite section in *Wizard*?
More Picks From the Wizard's Hat.

What's the last good movie you saw?
Of Mice and Men.

What's the last good book you read?
Whipping Boy, by John Byrne. Yeah, *that* John Byrne!

What's your favorite TV show?
Nothing, really; I don't watch enough TV to have a favorite.

What's your favorite musical group?
Electric Light Orchestra.

Who would play you in a movie?
Larry Wilcox of *CHiPs* or a younger Nick Nolte, as a lot of my friends say.

What's your favorite comic right now?
Danger Unlimited (sniff).

What's your favorite comic of all time?
Amazing Spider-Man #231-#232.

What are/were your nicknames?
Toy Boy, All-American Kid, Bri Guy.

What superpower would you want, and why?
I guess it's flight, but everybody always says flight.

WIZARD TOP 10

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID PRAGER

Top 10 things overheard at Moon Knight's funeral

10. "How did he get his whites so white?"
9. "Oh my god, Space Ghost's dead! Space Gho...Moon Knight? Who's Moon Knight?"
8. "Doesn't he have a chance at Kazar's record for #1 issues now?"
7. "Whoo-ee! What stinks?"
6. "Y'know, he was maybe the 14th-greatest West Coast Avenger."
5. "I got dibs on his parking space."
4. "Somebody please get Courtney Love out of here!"
3. "Anybody want to buy some *Moon Knight* #55s cheap?"
2. "Hey...does this mean Marlene's single?"
1. "Get to the part with the dirt!"

❑ COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #8
"The Shaq is back!" Shaquille O'Neal returns to the cover of *Collector's Sportslook* sporting his new Team USA uniform. Inside, former Los Angeles Laker Earvin "Magic" Johnson previews Dream Team 2's chances of winning the gold in Atlanta. Plus the 38 most-asked questions in sports collecting today (if you're nice, we'll even throw in the answers). We also explore the reasons why professional athletes don't make enough money and take a look at a big-time sports memorabilia auction. **$3.95**

❑ ER #10
The May issue of *Entertainment Retailing* sports a fantastic Superboy cover from the new DC Master series. Fabian Nicieza stops by to talk about the dos and don'ts of holding a creator appearance at your store and *ER* places its Spotlight on Image Executive Director Larry Marder. Also: a guest editorial by Dark Horse's Lou Bank, a look at Pyramid-brand trading cards from Upper Deck, and, as always, the insightful wisdom of *ER* regulars John Byrne and Beau Smith. **$2.95**

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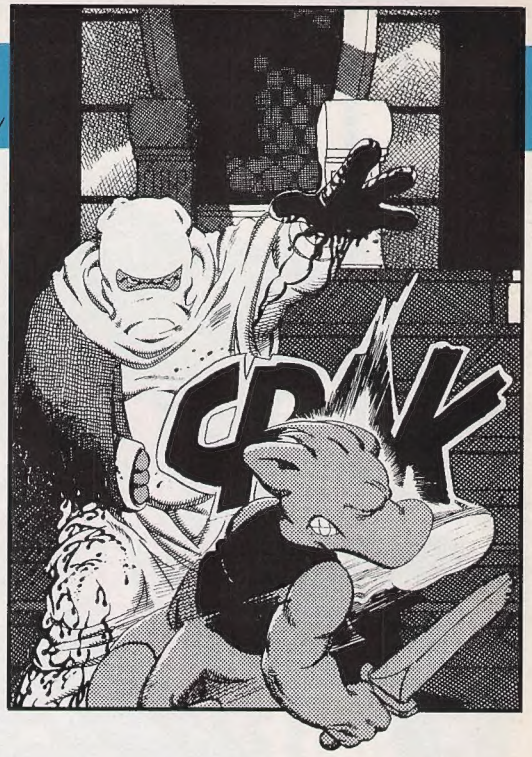
WIZARD Profile



CEREBUS ™ & © DAVE SIM

Here's looking at...GERHARD

Thanks to his flair for detail, the man known only as Gerhard has gained a reputation among his peers as one of the most talented background artists in the field today. His work can be found every month in the pages of Dave Sim's *Cerebus*, published by Sim's Aardvark-Vanaheim.

Born in the Canadian city of Edmonton, Alberta, the 35-year-old Gerhard says he has no specific influences. "There're artists that I like and appreciate and try to emulate...but I always wind up drawing the way I draw. I'm just stuck doing it that way."

Gerhard is based in Kitchener, Ontario, where Aardvark-Vanaheim is also located. He got into the industry in a rather unorthodox but straightforward way. While looking for work as a commercial artist, Gerhard delivered art supplies for a local art store. As it turned out, Sim was on his delivery route. After seeing Gerhard's pen and ink drawings, Sim hired him to do paste-up work for Aardvark-Vanaheim advertisements.

Gerhard soon assumed the role of *Cerebus*'s background inker, starting with issue #65, and his incredibly detailed crosshatching technique still amazes fans today. Sim was at first wary of hiring an assistant after already having done 64 issues on his own, but *Neil the Horse* creator Arn Saba convinced him that, in Gerhard's words, "as long as Dave was running the show and calling the shots and it was still his creative vision, it didn't matter who was helping him out on it."

Not only is Gerhard Sim's right-hand man artistically, he's also Aardvark-Vanaheim's vice president. "Dave and I split things up... He's in charge of advertising and promotions and I'm in charge of the day-to-day running of the office," he says.

Although his palette is currently concentrating almost exclusively on *Cerebus*, Gerhard plans to add to his credits by coloring the covers to writer/artist Steve Bissette's *Tyrant*, published by SpiderBaby Grafix & Publications. He has also thought about writing and drawing his own comics someday, although he has no specific plans.

Of *Cerebus*, Gerhard says, "It's Dave's story. I wouldn't presume to say anything about how he presents the story." But artistically, unless Sim wants a specific background, Gerhard has license to do as he pleases.

"I remember when I started and I read the first 64 issues. I was really disappointed that I wouldn't be able to sit down and read a complete issue. Now I read it one page, one panel at a time... Dave continues to surprise me at how he presents the story."

First comic book read...
Probably a Spider-Man or Iron Man book; I don't remember which one.

Favorite comic of all time...
From Hell by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell.

Favorite work of your own...
The entire run of "Jaka's Story" [*Cerebus* #114-#136].

Comics you currently read...
From Hell, *Hate*, *Yummy Fur*, *Sandman*, and *Bone*.

Person you'd most like to meet...
Albert Einstein. I'd love to have a couple of drinks with him.

Superpower you'd most like to have...
Flight, because I've just always wanted to fly.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Leftover pizza and pistachio nuts.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, it was a wooden jeep my father built; you could put license plates on it. Now it would be my fretless bass guitar.

Things you collect...
I have two sailboats; one's 24 feet and the other's an 18-foot boat.

Favorite pastime or hobby...
Sailing, playing the bass, 35-millimeter photography, canoeing, and skiing.

Favorite television show...
The Simpsons, because it's funny and doesn't suck.

Costume you wore the last time you went trick-or-treating...
Tonto. My friend must've been the Lone Ranger.

Nickname...
Dave calls me Spunky. I have no idea how I got it.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Bob Denver.

Person you'd most like to work with...
Alan Moore or Neil Gaiman.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
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